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THE

QUEENS

BEFORE THE CONQUEST.

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BY

MRS. MATTHEW HALL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

OSTRIDA AND WERBURGA,

Queens of Ethelred and Ceolred.

Page

Ostrida marries Ethelred, the youngest son of Penda—Elfwin slain—Archbishop Theodore endeavours to reconcile the Kings—Ostrida removes the bones of Saint Oswald—Abbey of Bardney—The miracle of the pillar of light—The standard—Embroidery—The spinsters—Visit of Ethelhild—Holy dust—Its effect—Ostrida slain—Ferocity of the times—Ethelred abdicates—He becomes Abbot at Bardney—Kenred makes a pilgrimage to Rome—Werburga enters a convent

QUENBURGA, QUENSWITHA, AND ALFLEDA,

Queens of Alfred, Penda, and Peada.

The daughters of Penda—Penda's warlike propensities—Queen Keneswitha accepts the care of Oswy's son—Quenburga's marriage—Peada and Alfleda—Stipulations—Peada baptised at Carlisle—Penda's opinions—Influence of females in conversion—Quenburga's devotion—Court of Alfred a monastic school—Alfred's death—Quenburga returns to her father's dominions—Retires to Dormund Caistor—The three sisters all become nuns—Penda's death—Death of Peada—His wife, his mother, and his mistress suspected of his murder—Oswy seizes his dominions—Two young princesses take the veil. - - - - - 11

HERESWYTHA, SEXBURGA, ETHELDREDA, ERMENBURGA, AND ERMENILDA,

Queens of Anna, Ercombert, Egfrid, and Wulphere.

Religious enthusiasm—Church building—Queen Hereswytha, "the Mother of many Saints"—Her husband, King Anna—Etheldreda and Thonbert—She retires to a monastery—Her second marriage to Egfrid—Their establishment—Egfrid's remonstrance—Etheldreda goes to a convent, accompanied by

Page

Bishop Wilfred—Architecture and Church Music patronised by Wilfred—Anger of Egfrid—Their separation—He re-marries—Ermenburga persecutes Wilfred—Anglo-Saxon carriage—Wilfred's trials—Sexburga's piety—Her daughter—The Abbess Hildegitha—The Convent of Minstre—Ermenilda's, and her young daughter Werburga's, piety—Murder of the young princes, Wulfade and Rufin—Werburga's profession—The Abbess Etheldreda's edifying death—St. Audrey's lace, and St. Etheldred's chain—Ely Monastery—Sexburga's happy death—The butterfly shadow—Miracles—St. Werburga, the Patroness of Chester—Ely Cathedral—Antiquities—The stone cross of Etheldreda - - 19

DOMNEVA,

Queen of Merowald.

Lady Eva—Marriage with the son of Penda—The Queen takes the veil in her husband Merowald's life—She founds the Abbey of Minstre, to atone for the murder of her brothers by Egbert—"The Deer's course"—Pious *ruse*—Fate of Thunor the murderer—The humility of Mildred—Leobgitha's verses—Gold and silver ink—The Abbess Eadburga—The letters of St. Boniface to the pious Abbess—The Danes—Mildgitha retires to Estrey—Estrey Court—The sepulchres of the murdered princes there—Mildburga and her father—Their tombs in the Abbey of Wenlock - - 52

ETHELBURGA AND FRIDOGITHA,

Queens of Ina and Ethelard.

Invasion of Ivor and Ina—Conditions of the Conquerors—Marriage of Ethelburga to Ivor—His death, and her marriage to his successor, Ina—The arch of Taunton Castle—Ealdbryght Clito besieged by Ethelburga—The "Western Key of the Kingdom"—The Laws of Ina—Guala—The learned men of Ina's time—The Abbey of Glastonbury, and its rich endowments—Ethelburga's pious project—The splendid banquet and the contrast—Its effect on the King—Discourse of Ethelburga—The Crown resigned—Ethelard—Preparations for a pilgrimage to Rome—Departure of the King and Queen as pilgrims—Arrival in Rome—Religious acts—The Saxon school of Ina at Rome—Rome scot—Return to England of the royal pair—Death of Ina—Ethelburga at Barking—Cuthberga, Abbess of Wimbourne—Canonization of the Abbess-Queen—The three daughters of Ina—Fridogitha's liberality—Her piety and pilgrimage—Her death and canonization—St. Frideswide - - - 64

QUENDRIDA-PETRONILLA,

Queen of Offa "the Proud." Page

Melo-dramatic legend of Quendrida—King Offa screened by monkish writers—Unknown crime of Petronilla—Exposure in an open boat—Stranding of the beautiful stranger on the Welsh coast—Meeting of Offa and Quendrida—Fascination of the young King—Opposition of his parents—The royal marriage—Death of both Offa's parents—Offa's early deficiencies—Sudden change—Beornred's wars—His defeat—Offa's dyke—The Emperor Charlemagne—His letters and presents to Offa—Demand in marriage of Prince and Princess—Interruption of the friendship of the two Kings—Close of the French ports—Alcuin the Learned—Harmony re-established—The Princess Eadburga's marriage—Young Ethelbert, King of East Anglia—His proposal for the hand of the beautiful Etheldritha, youngest daughter of Offa—Excellent character of Ethelbert—His arrival in Mercia—Omens—Rich gifts and grand retinue of the bridegroom—Etheldritha, at her window, admires the beauty and grandeur of her lover—Quendrida's envy and hatred—Offa's welcome—The Queen's treacherous proposal—The chair of state—The canopy and the well—The murder accomplished—Despair of the bride—Her anathema—She leaves her father's court—Offa's remorse—Banishment of the guilty Queen—The spoils she took—Robbers—Her deserved fate—Offa builds cathedrals—The shrine of St. Ethelbert—Divine judgment on Offa's race - - - - - 77

EADBURGA.—ELFLEDA,

Queens of Bertric and Wimond.

Pride of Eadburga—Prince Egbert's banishment—He seeks shelter with Offa; is refused hospitality—Flies to the court of Charlemagne—The Queen's influence; her jealousy, and vindictive character—Infatuation of her husband—Her hatred of Worr—Her attempts to ruin him—Resistance of Bertric—The banquet—The poisoned cup—Death of the King and his friend—Flight of the Queen—She seeks the court of Charlemagne, is well received there at first—Her beauty and her gifts—Change of public estimation—Charlemagne's sarcastic offer—The incautious reply of the widow—The Emperor's contempt—His bestowal of a convent on her—Her conduct as Abbess—Her expulsion and degraded position—Her arrival at Pavia and destitution—Her death in misery—Her quaint epitaph—Detestation of her memory—Title of Queen not allowed by Anglo-Saxons—Egbert's succession—The contrast of the sisters—The Abbess of Croyland—Witlaf's sojourn and gifts; his attachment to Etheldritha—The Danes—Elfleda, daughter of Kenulf—Her son Wistan—Rejected offer of Berferth—Murder of Wistan - - 97

QUENDRIDA II.

Page

The granddaughter of Offa's Queen—Her great abilities and the high position she holds in the state—She is left guardian to her young brother Kenelm—Her sister Burganilda attached to the young King—His tutor Ascobert—The traitorous designs of Quendrida on the life of Kenelm—Ascobert agrees to aid her plans—Kenelm's dream—His uneasiness—He informs his nurse, who interprets it—Aware of his danger, he removes to a secure place—The Castle of Kenilworth chosen as his abode—The family of the Kenelms—The hunting-excursion to Clint Wood—The murder of the young Prince and concealment of his body in a pit—Quendrida mounts the throne—Is suspected by the people—Driven from the government, which is given to her uncle Kenulf—She assumes a religious habit, but retains her patrimony, the Abbey of Winchcomb—Touching legend of the revelation at Rome of the death of Kenelm—Discovery of the body—Canonization of the murdered Prince—Chapel built—Quendrida's scorn—The judgment of Heaven on her—Her death - - - - - 107

OSBURGA AND ETHELSWYTHA.

Queens of Ethelwulf and Burhred.

The mother of Alfred the Great—Earl Oslac, her father, cupbearer to King Ethelwulf—Wars with the Danes—The King first intended for the Church—His choice of the cupbearer's daughter—Her virtues and industry—Needlework of the Anglo-Saxon ladies—The five sons of Osburga—Her daughter Ethelswytha married to the King of Mercia—The title of Queen revived—The Danes overrun Mercia—Subdue Burhred, and force him to abandon his country—He dies at Rome—His Queen follows him, and dies on the road—Alfred's infancy—Prayer of Osburga—The story of the illuminated book of Saxon verse—The children's anxiety—Alfred's resolution and success—The pilgrimage to Rome of Ethelwulf, accompanied by his young son—Uncertainty respecting Osburga—Ethelwulf's return with Judith, the French princess—Death of Osburga - - 118

JUDITH OF FRANCE,

Second Queen of Ethelwulf.

Motives of Ethelwulf for his visits to the Court of Charles the Bald—Beauty of the Princess Judith—Attachment of Count Baldwin of Flanders—Ethelwulf's offer accepted—Splendid marriage of Judith to Ethelwulf—Royal presents—Ethelwulf

Page

takes his bride to England—They are ill received—Ealstan, Bishop of Sherburne, excites Ethelbald to rebellion—Offence given to the Church—Ethelwulf proclaims Judith Queen, in despite of opposition—Ethelwulf yields to his son to avoid bloodshed — Judith crowned — Prayers on the occasion — Alfred and his young mother-in-law study together in retirement—Ethelwulf's death—Ethelbald forcibly marries his widow—Displeasure of the people and the clergy—He becomes penitent — Separates from Judith — She sells her dower, and travels, on her return to her father's court, through Flanders—Meeting of Judith and Baldwin—Consequences of her stay—Anger of Charles the Bald—She is placed in a convent—Rescued by her brothers—Elopes with Baldwin—Enmity and final forgiveness of the French King—The children of Judith—Matilda, wife of William of Normandy—Ballad of the imaginary adventures of the "King's Daughter" - - -. - 127

ELSWITHA, Queen of Alfred the Great, and ETHELFLEDA, "Lady of Mercia."

Romantic legend of the meeting of Alfred the Great and Elswitha—Albanac's family—The nocturnal visit—The daughters—The father's resolve—The choice offered—Marriage of Alfred and Elswitha—Sudden illness of the bridegroom —Connubial affection—Passage in Boethius—Famine in England—St. Swithun—Children of Elswitha—Her happiness, and fondness for her husband—Athelney—The Danes—Dangers — Generosity of Alfred — Monastery founded — Alfred's Will—Eadburga and Elswitha—St. Mary's, Newminster—Learning of Ethelfleda—Lady of Mercia—Her numerous fortresses—The captive Welsh Queen—Fleance, son of Banquo—Ancient Welsh customs—Candle-bearer's perquisites—Death of Ethelfleda—Mourned by King Edward —Elfwina dispossessed by her uncle—Ethelfleda buried in St. Peter's, Gloucester - - - - 153

EGWINA, ELFLEDA, EDGIFA, AND ELFGIFA, Queens of Edward "the Elder" and Edmond "the Pious."

Romantic tale of Athelstan's mother—The loves of Egwina and Edward—Dream of the Shepherd's daughter—The nurse of the King's children—Adoption of Egwina—The bright light —Edward's second wife Elfleda; her seven children—His third wife Edgifa—Edgifa's lawsuit and will—Athelstan and Beatrice—Goda's dishonesty—Education of the family of Edward the Elder—Eadburga the nun; her choice—Ed-

Page

ward's death, and his son Ethelwerd's—Athelstan named as successor—He provides for his family—Beatrice marries Sihtric, King of Northumberland—Edgifa marries Charles the Simple—Her trials and story—Edgifa and Elfgifa sent to Germany—The marriage-list of the sisters—Hugh the Great and Edilda—The marriage presents—Revived fortunes of Edgifa and her son, Louis d'Outremer—Restoration and imprudence—Harshness of Louis to his mother—The widow of Edward the Elder still goes on with her lawsuit—Edmund the Pious—St. Dunstan—The precipice—Elfgiva—Legend—Explanation of the dream—Edmond assassinated—Reay Cross on Stanmore—Monasteries—Edred and St. Dunstan—Edwy the Tyrant; his ill-usage of his grandmother—Edgar re-establishes her in her rights—She bestows her property on the Church—Her death - - - - 178

ETHELGIVA,

Queen of Edwy "the Fair."

Ethelgiva's relationship to the young Prince Edwy the Fair—Her extreme beauty—St. Dunstan's character and history—His contentions with the Devil; his temptations and triumphs—The fame of the Saint—St. Dunstan's mortification to find the young King married—The forced coronation—Flight of the King—Anger of the Nobles—Rage of the Bishops—Discovery of the weeping Bride—Insults to Edwy and Ethelgiva—Passionate words of the Mother of the young Queen—Fury of Dunstan—Sympathy of the People for the Royal Pair—Ethelgiva refused the title of Queen—Edwy's dislike to the ambitious Prelate—The evil spirit at Glastonbury—Flight of Dunstan—His dangers from his enemies, the married priests—Security of the Royal Lovers—Seizure of Ethelgiva: horrible vengeance—She is sent to Ireland—Odo's representations to the King—His despair—His troubles—His brother Edgar—Recall of Dunstan—Divorce pronounced against Ethelgiva—Excommunication of Edwy—Recovery of Ethelgiva, and attempt to return—Waylaid on her journey—Hamstrung and starved to death—Broken heart of Edwy—He dies—Buried at Winchester - - - - 205

ELFRIDA,

Queen of Edgar "the Peaceable."

Edgar's volatile character—Wulfreda, the nun—Ethelflede the Fair, mother of Edward—Her death, and Elfrida's beauty—Ethelwold's mission—His deception, and marriage to Elfrida—Misrepresentation to the king—Ethelwold's son—Hunting—The tribute of wolves' heads—The concealed beauty—

Page

Ethelwold's confession to his wife—Her resolve—Her conquest—The murder in the forest—Marriage of Edgar and Elfrida—St. Dunstan—Elfrida's power—Contentions—Ventriloquism—Ely—Ordwulf, the giant—Dissolute clergy—Coronation at Bath—King Edgar's death—Edward the Martyr—His cruel murder—Ethelred's tears: the whipping with wax candles—Pledging—Miracles—Penitence of the Queen postponed—Saxon verses—Dunstan's anathema—Murder of Brithnoth, Abbot of Ely—Ethelred asserts his will—Elfrida returns to Warewell—Her religious edifices—Wulfreda ejected from Barking—Death of Elfrida—Royal grant to the convent - - - - 219

EMMA OF NORMANDY,

SURNAMED "THE PEARL,"

Queen of Ethelred "the Unready" and Canute "the Great."

The Pearl of Normandy—Parentage of Emma—Quarrels settled—Emma's Marriage with Ethelred, 1002, at Winchester—She receives the popular name of Elfgiva—Unsuitableness of Ethelred—His personal appearance—The songs of Gunnlaugr the Scald—The Sagas: their value—Danegelt, its odiousness to the English—Massacre of the Danes on the Eve of St. Brice—Gunilda's fate—Her anathema—Emma's sorrow concealed—The neglect of Ethelred towards his wife—She appeals to her brother—Anger of the Duke of Normandy—Reconciliation—Hugh and Alwyn—Siege of Exeter—Oath of fealty to Emma's unborn babe—Birth of her son, Edward the Confessor—Alfred, the eldest son, set aside on account of a prophecy—Emma flies from the troubles in England, with her children, to Normandy—Remains there two years—They are followed by Ethelred—"Unready" a title fitting for the weak King—London Bridge is broken down—Edmund Ironside—Algitha at Malmesbury Abbey—Death of Ethelred—Canute marries Emma—Her weight in gold—Influence of Emma—Mutual attachment—Danish dandies—Drinking-cups—Back-gammon—Poets—Story of Canute and his courtiers—Splendid gifts to abbeys—The King's verses—Vauland, the smith—Hardicanute and Gunilda—King Olaf—Death of Canute—Earl Godwin's power—Treacherous letter to Emma's sons—Murder of Alfred—Suspicions—Harold—Emma's exile and return—Hardicanute—The gilded ship—The dwarf Mimicon—Death of Hardicanute—Edward succeeds—His conduct to his mother—The trial of the ploughshares—Triumph—Death of Emma - - 256

EDITHA "THE GOOD,"

Queen of Edward "the Confessor."

Page

The "Rose among thorns"—Earl Godwin's romantic story—Canute's new soldier—His advancement—Marries Githa; made Earl—Thora and the slave trade—Bristol the mart—Godwin's connexion with royalty—Editha's beauty and meekness—The compact of Earl Godwin—Delays of King Edward—His dislike to Editha—Their marriage—Edward's coldness—Dress and manners of the time—Splendour of priests—Wulstan's reproof—Long hair—Editha's humility—Her coronation—Edward's vows—Unkindness to his Queen—The Queen's spiritual friends—Westminster Abbey founded—Editha's pious donations—Leofrina's will—Curious stone picture on the screen at Westminster Abbey—Quarrel of Tostig and Harold, when boys, represented—Installation of Leofric, Bishop of Exeter—Famine—Edward remits the tax of Danegelt—Rupture with Earl Godwin—Flight of Godwin and his family to Flanders—His banishment—Triumph of the Normans—Imprisonment of Queen Editha—Bishop Robert's accusation—A year of seclusion at Wherwell—Weakness of Edward—Godwin's triumphal return—Restoration of his party—The Queen returns to Court—Her triumph—Earl Godwin's sudden death—Edward sends for the son of Edmond Ironside—His arrival and death—Editha accused of cruelty—Royal chaplains—Dedication of Waltham Abbey—Bore-stall—Havering Bower—The pilgrim and the ring—Dedication of St. Peter's, Westminster—The King's death—Harold succeeds—Battle of Hastings—William the Conqueror—Editha's epitaph - 338

EDITHA "THE FAIR,"

Queen of Harold II.

The father of Editha—Godiva, wife of Leofric—Wealth and power of the Earl of Coventry—The famous legend considered—Leofric's munificence to the Church—The lines in the painted window—Godiva's donation to Coventry Abbey—Algar, father of Editha the Fair, flies to Wales—Marries his daughter to the Welsh Prince, Griffith ap Llewelyn—Nest, his first wife—Her sons—Griffith ap Conan and his wife Angharaud—Violent contentions of the Welsh and English—Restoration of Algar—Harold pursues the Welsh—Defeats them—Lays siege to and burns Ruddlan Castle—Editha the Fair taken prisoner—Death of Griffith—Harold marries his widow—Hereford destroyed and re-fortified—Harold's pillars—His breach of promise to Adeliza—Harold becomes King—The battle of Hastings—The search for the body—Editha the Swan necked—The Recluse of Chester—Eddeva Dives—Her possessions seized by the Conqueror—Stortford in Hertfordshire—The tomb discovered - - - 384

LIVES

OF

BRITISH QUEENS

BEFORE THE CONQUEST.

OSTRIDA AND WERBURGA,

QUEENS OF MERCIA.

CONTENTS.

Ostrida marries Ethelred, the youngest son of Penda—Elfwin slain—Archbishop Theodore endeavours to reconcile the Kings—Ostrida removes the bones of Saint Oswald—Abbey of Bardney—The miracle of the pillar of light—The standard—Embroidery—The spinsters—Visit of Ethelhild—Holy dust—Its effect—Ostrida slain—Ferocity of the times—Ethelred abdicates—He becomes Abbot at Bardney—Kenred makes a pilgrimage to Rome—Werberga enters a convent.

OSTRIDA was the youngest of Oswy's daughters by his Queen, Enfleda, and was born in the year 657, the fifteenth of her father's reign, about the period when her sister Alfleda was united to Peada, the eldest son of the Mercian King. This princess was lineally descended from Ida, founder of the Kingdom of Northumberland, on her father's side; while on that of her mother, grand-daughter of Bertha and Ethelbert, she claimed her origin from the French monarchs, and the

famous hero Woden, the common ancestor of the Anglo-Saxon princes. Bradshawe, writing of Ostrida, calls her "a beautiful lady, of noble lineage, born in the north part."

The death of Oswy took place when Ostrida was only thirteen years of age, and her half-brother, Egfrid, formerly a hostage at the Mercian court, became King.[1] It was in the seventh year of Egfrid's reign that Ostrida married Ethelred, the youngest of Penda's sons, who had been on the throne about three years.[2] Notwithstanding this alliance, two years afterwards, Ethelred, though a peace-loving prince, made war on Egfrid, who had invaded his dominions. The cause of the dispute between these near relatives was this: some towns in Mercia had been taken in the reign of Wulphere, and Ethelred demanded restitution from Egfrid of the province of the Lindiswaras.[3] In a great battle, fought near the river Trent, Elfwin, a youth of eighteen, brother of Egfrid and Alfleda the former Queen of the Mercians, was unhappily slain—a prince who was dear to both nations for his mother's sake.

This painful occurrence would have caused the war to break out more fiercely than ever, but for the timely interposition of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, who succeeded in reconciling the two Kings and their people, without any one being put to death on the occasion. The usual mulct for a murder was, however, paid by Ethelred to King Egfrid. It is thought, that the lasting peace which followed, and even Ethelred's secure possession of the crown he wore, were secured

[1] Holinshed. [2] Speed, Palgrave, Leland.
[3] Natives of Lincolnshire.—Lingard, Rapin, Bede.

to him by the fact of his being united to Ostrida, the Northumbrian princess; for, though the *were* for Elfwin's death was paid, he recovered the possession of the disputed territories A.D. 679.

Ostrida was present at a grand general witenagemote, held at Heathfield (now Bishop's Hatfield, in Hertfordshire), by her husband, which was attended by all the chief prelates of the Saxon Heptarchy, the object of the meeting being to preserve the English Church from the heresy of the Eutyches. On this occasion, King Ethelred made large donations to the Abbey of Peterborough, besides confirming previous grants. Ostrida appended her name to the new donation made by the King at this assembly—"I, Ostrida, Ethelred's Queen, confirm it." This signature is preceded by those of[1] Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury; Wilfred, Archbishop of York; and Sexwulf, first Abbot of Peterborough, but at that time Bishop of Lichfield; and after the Queen's name appear those of Adrian, the Pope's legate; Putta, Bishop of Rochester; and Waldhere, Bishop of London. Before the grant of King Ethelred was signed, the Pope's letter was read, ratified, and confirmed by the council.[2]

[1] An example of the clerical costume of the seventh century may be seen in the church of Malmsbury, in Wilts, in the figure of St. Peter, who, with other apostles, is wrought, in the south porch of that edifice, in basso-relievo; the date given by Fosbrooke is 675; the work is Saxon, and sketched in 1801. The double keys in the right hand of St. Peter (head of the Church); book, with jewels, of the New Testament in the left; the robes are becoming and well-disposed, jewels on the border of the neck, feet bare. The doorway at the entrance of the same church, exhibits the figure of a religious, in basso-relievo, dressed in the simple monk's habit, hood, &c.—Fosbrooke's, Brit. Monachism.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, Dugdale, vol. i. 67, Turner.

One of the most interesting acts of Queen Ostrida was her removal of the bones of her uncle, King Oswald, to Bardney Abbey,[1] in Lincolnshire.

The Abbey of Bardney, founded by King Ethelred,[2] is thus spoken of by Bede, in his account of some miracles which attended the translation of the relics of that sainted king. "There is a noble monastery, in the province of Lindsey, called Beardeneu, which Queen Ostrida and her husband Ethelred much loved, and conferred upon it many honours and ornaments." It was here that she was desirous to lay the venerable bones of her uncle. The fulfilment of her purpose brought to light a strong point of feeling in the minds of the Mercians. "When the waggon in which these bones were carried, arrived towards evening in the aforesaid monastery, *they that were in it refused to admit them*, because, though they knew him to be a holy man, yet, as he was originally of another province, and had *reigned over them as a foreign king, they retained their ancient aversion to him even after death.* Thus it came to pass that the relics were left in the open air all that night, with only a large tent spread over them." Small respect seems here to have been shown to the wishes of the royal lady, their Queen and mistress. A miracle was requisite to discover to them their error: through the whole night, from the waggon up to the heavens, was seen a pillar of light, visible throughout the province of Lindsey; and the next day, the very brethren who had refused to receive the royal relics, prayed to God to permit them to be deposited among them. Accordingly the bones, being washed, were put into a shrine which they had made for that

[1] Fabian says "the Abbey of Bourdeaux." [2] Willis's Abbeys.

purpose, and placed in the church with due honour; and that there might be a "perpetual memorial" of the royal Oswald, "they hung up over the monument his banner, made of gold and purple."[1] This standard had been wrought "by no hands, as ye may guess," but those of Queen Ostrida herself, who, by her own industry, and at her own cost, decorated the tomb in which the hallowed relics of her departed relative were deposited.[2]

During the seventh century, much talent was exhibited by our Anglo-Saxon countrywomen in the art of embroidery: women of the highest rank excelled in the accomplishment, and the example was followed by others. The products of this feminine industry and skill were usually devoted to the Church and its ministers, and were esteemed so valuable as to become heirlooms, bequeathed by their owners to those most dear to them. The needles of illustrious women were busy, from the fair Ostrida, who wrought the tragedy of a murdered uncle, to the Norman Matilda, who depicted upon canvas the heroic actions of a warlike husband. The Anglo-Saxon ladies excelled in needlework and gold embroidery, and also were acquainted with the arts of weaving and dyeing. The last is alluded to by St. Aldhelm, in these words: "The shuttles, not filled with purple only, but with various colours, are moved here and there among the thick spreading of the threads, and by the embroidering art they adorn all the woven work with various groupes of images." Spinning was, indeed, so common an employment of the female sex, even among women of royal blood, that the will of King Alfred terms the members of his family

[1] Bede. [2] Speed, Butler, Harding.

who were of the female sex, "the spindle side;" so that the modern term of "spinster" has descended to us in allusion to those unmarried, and able to devote themselves to feminine accomplishments more exclusively.

The banner of Ostrida is said to have been wrought of purple and gold: a robe worn by Aldheln was constructed of a purple ground, composed of delicate thread, upon which appeared black circles; and in those circles were wrought the figures of peacocks, of an ample size. Such was the taste of the seventh century, in which age abundance of goldsmiths and jewellers were to be found ready to assist the fair patronesses of their art; of whom Bede says, that they were skilled in collecting "remarkable and precious stones, to be placed among the gold and silver, which were mostly of a ruddy or aërial colour." It was customary with the sovereigns of the Heptarchy to present rich garments, vases, bracelets, and rings, to their witenagemote and courtiers, which example was followed by their queens-consort.[1]

The superstitions of the days in which Ostrida lived are well attested by the miracles related by the venerable Bede. One of those is connected with the Queen, who, at the time, was on a visit at Bardney Abbey. Ethelhild, sister of the abbot, came there to pay her respects to her royal mistress, from her own convent, which was not far distant. The conversation happening to turn on the uncle-saint of Ostrida, Lady Ethelhild remarked, she had been an eye-witness of the pillar of light which reached from earth to heaven, before alluded to. The Queen thereupon added, that the very dust of the pavement, on which the water that washed the bones had been spilt, had already healed many sick

[1] Sharon Turner.

persons.[1] The abbess, upon hearing this, desired that some of the said dust might be given her, which she tied up in a cloth, and putting it into a casket, returned home. Not long after, a visitor at the monastery was suddenly seized with an evil spirit, so that none could bind him, and the abbess, with one of the nuns, was sent for to his assistance. All efforts to assuage his madness were fruitless; but suddenly the abbess had recourse to the holy dust in the casket, which she had received from Queen Ostrida. When a small portion was given to the sufferer, and after the priest had prayed over him, he had a quiet night, nor was he ever after disturbed by his old enemy. Bede, who related this adventure of Ethelhild, speaks of her as "a certain venerable abbess of that name, who is still living."

Ostrida's union with Ethelred lasted for twenty years, during which she had but one son, who received the name of Ceolred.[2] A sad fate overtook her soon after this period: she was upon a journey through North Mercia, and was attacked and slain by the people of the district over which her husband ruled; these were the South Humbrians, or people of the territories which lay south of the Trent. This treasonable act is supposed to have been committed by the heads of the State, who raised an insurrection to revenge on Ostrida the death of Peada, their former King, murdered by Alchfleda, the Queen's half-sister. Unlikely as such a cause might be, that circumstance having occurred when Ostrida was yet in her cradle, it has been assigned by our historians, in the absence of any evidence as to the real one which

[1] It had the virtue of expelling devils from the bodies of persons possessed.—Bede.

[2] Speed, Rapin, Lan hornii Chron., Palgrave, Holinshed

occasioned the Queen's untimely end. This tragical event affords an example of the ferocity of the times: it happened A.D. 697, Ostrida being forty years of age, half of which she had resided among the people to whom she owed her undeserved death. Ethelred had reigned twenty-three years with much honour, when he was bereaved of his consort. The little care taken either by himself or his son to discover the murderers, has led to a suspicion that the King personally connived at the circumstance; or, that the murderer was too nearly connected with him to be denounced. Whether this were the case or not, it is a fact, that the cruel death of Ostrida so affected the mind of Ethelred, that from that time he could not discharge the duties of royalty, but resigned his regal dignity and dominions to Kenred, his nephew, son of Wulphere: whether sorrow for her loss, or penitence for his own share in the crime, induced this, is unknown.

Kenred was arrived at maturity, and the son of Ostrida was still too young to govern; so that in his abdication Ethelred consulted the wishes of the discontented nation. He assumed the monastic habit of the Benedictines, and having first taken the vows at Bardney, became abbot of that monastery, which had been patronized by his consort when living, afterwards her place of abode, and where her last mortal remains now reposed.[1]

Ethelred abdicated in 704,[2] the time of his entering the cloister; and eight years after became abbot. He discharged the duties of his station for four years only, at the end of which he died at an advanced age, having

[1] Willis's Abbeys.

[2] Willis says 712, and that Ethelred was abbot only four years.

survived Queen Ostrida nineteen years. The royal founder and Abbot of Bardney was interred in that monastery, where his tomb was still to be seen in the days of William of Malmesbury. The piety and munificence of Ethelred and Ostrida caused their names to be numbered among the Saxon saints.

The royal donation of a crown temporal in these times was "found wanting," when weighed in the balance with the crown eternal, which prince and peasant alike strove to obtain. In the hope of a reward in heaven, Kenred returned the present of a kingdom to his cousin Ceolred, the son of Ostrida, and making a pilgrimage to Rome, passed the residue of his life there in penance and devotion; he had been accompanied in his devotional expedition by Offa, King of Essex, who had married a sister of Ethelred and Wulphere. Kenred died at Rome, A.D. 711.[1]

Ceolred, after an eight years' reign, died King of Mercia, and was buried in the chapel of Mary, at Litchfield Cathedral, where stood the shrine of St. Chad. He left no children by his Queen Werburga, who, like her namesake, the daughter of Wulphere and Ermenilda, received the honours of canonization. Of the family whence the royal Werburga, wife of Ceolred, sprang, historians leave us in ignorance. When her husband died, Werburga entered a monastery, probably that in Holy Island, where she was residing at the time of her death, which event is placed by the Saxon Chronicle in 782-783, and is given by Hoveden in these words:—"Werburga, formerly Queen of the Mercians, then abbess, ceased to live here, that she might live for ever with Christ, anno 783."

[1] Holinshed, Pennant.

Werburga had arrived at a good old age, in the habitual practice of piety and virtue; her character is given in these words: "Like the holy widow, Anna the prophetess, she never departed from our Lord's temple, serving God night and day, in abstinence and prayer, for the space of sixty-five years. For the latter part of that time she was abbess of the monastery, and showed no less humility in governing others than she had before in obeying."[1] Beautiful, at all times, is Christian humility; but how much more so when viewed amidst the attributes of pomp and power, as in a queen towards her subjects, or an abbess to the flock committed to her charge! Werburga was not a solitary instance; for another Queen, named Richryda, adorned this period of the Saxon Heptarchy by embracing the desired employments of another life, it being her office "to carry oil with lamps before the great ones of the Lord."

[1] Brit. Sancta.

QUENBURGA, QUENSWITHA, AND ALFLEDA.

CONTENTS.

The daughters of Penda—Penda's warlike propensities—Queen Keneswitha accepts the care of Oswy's son—Quenburga's marriage—Peada and Alfleda—Stipulations—Peada baptised at Carlisle—Penda's opinions—Influence of females in conversion—Quenburga's devotion—Court of Alfred a monastic school—Alfred's death—Quenburga returns to her father's dominions—Retires to Dormund Caistor—The three sisters all become nuns—Penda's death—Death of Peada—His wife, his mother, and his mistress suspected of his murder—Oswy seizes his dominions—Two young princesses take the veil.

"Keneburg in this our sainted front shall stand,
To Alfred the loved wife, King of Northumberland."

Drayton's Polyolbion.

QUENBURGA and Quenswitha were sisters; their father Penda, King of Mercia, had a very numerous family by his Queen, who also bore the name of Quenswitha. Four princes, Peada, Wupher, Ethelred, and Merowald, became noted Kings of the Saxon Heptarchy. Mercelin, a fifth, was celebrated for piety, and has been

entered on the saintly calendar;[1] while, besides the two daughters already named, whose honourable career has transmitted their names to posterity, may be mentioned their sisters Quendrida, Idaberge, and Walburga, the last of whom wore the crown-matrimonial of Sussex.

The father of this remarkable family maintained his power for thirty years, which he spent in continual wars with his neighbours. His adventurous spirit "hated peace worse than death." Five Kings of the Anglo-Saxons perished in contending against his arms, besides the renowned Edwin and Oswald. Penda, in his sister Saxburga's cause, turned his arms against Northumberland, and penetrated as far as the capital city of Bamborough, setting fire to every habitation in the line of his march. Oswy, the Northumbrian monarch, warned by the fate of his kingly predecessors, made every effort to conciliate his formidable enemy. He not only sent him the most valuable presents, but delivered over his second son, Egfrid, as a hostage into the care of Queen Keneswitha, wife of Penda. It was on this occasion that a match was proposed, which it was hoped would establish a lasting peace between the two hostile nations. This was the marriage of Alfred, eldest son of Oswy, by Enfleda, the Kentish princess, to Quenburga, daughter of the Mercian King. This tie, which took place shortly after, was very important in its consequences. On the occasion of Quenburga's coming to Northumberland, she was accompanied by her eldest brother Peada, who then beheld and fell in love with Alfleda, half-sister of Alfred, the King's illegitimate daughter, by a lady bearing the same name, and who was sister of Egfrid, and of another Alfred

[1] Speed, Rapin, Malmesbury, Fabian, Butler.

often mistaken for the son of Enfleda, who had married Quenburga.[1]

Peada[2] demanded Alfleda of Oswy for his bride, but Oswy refused to accede to the proposal of the Mercian prince, unless he would become a convert to the faith his daughter professed. The royal husband of his sister Quenburga was a firm believer in Christianity; she was mainly instrumental in persuading Peada to embrace its holy doctrines; and that he did this from a sincere conviction, appears from the answer he made when interrogated on the subject: he remarked, with much warmth, "that no consideration, not even the refusal of Alfleda, should provoke him to return to the worship of Wodin."

Peada was accordingly baptized prior to his union with Alfleda; the ceremony was performed by Bishop Finnan, and all his train received the sacred rite with him. This interesting event was witnessed at Carlisle. This city had arrived at great consequence under the Romans, and though afterwards ravaged by the Picts and Scots, was still, for its ancient splendour, accounted a city. When, in a later period, Egfrid, the brother of Alfleda, reigned in Northumberland, he gave the city to St. Cuthbert; and Bede paid a visit there in 686, at the time St. Cuthbert was Bishop of Lindisfarne, and describes the walls, which the townspeople took him to

[1] The second Alfred, King of Northumberland, brother of Egfrid, who succeeded Oswy, of whom they were illegitimate children. The first Alfred, who married Quenburga of Mercia, reigned over Deira, but at his death the people of that district revolted in favour of Egfrid. The youth of the second Alfred was passed in exile in Ireland, whence he was afterwards recalled to assume the crowns of Bernicia and Deira.

[2] Lingard, Biographia Britannica, Holinshed.

see, and a fountain or well of admirable workmanship, which had been early constructed by the Romans.[1]

Before Peada quitted Mercia, in 653, he had been crowned by his father King of Leicester, so that Alfleda might be considered by her marriage Queen of that portion of the Heptarchy. At this period Mercia was divided into two parts, called North and South Mercia, the river Trent forming the boundary between them; the southern division, which belonged to Peada, was called also the Mediterranean, or Middle Angles, and contained 7000 households. The young Queen was conducted by her husband into his dominions attended by his train, and by four Christian priests, Cidd, Betti, Adda, and Diuma, whom he engaged to instruct his subjects in the new faith.[2] It had been expected that Penda would oppose his son's conversion, as he was a great enemy to Christianity; but either all religions were alike to him, or he treated the subject with complacency for the sake of a son much beloved; for not only did he suffer, and indeed promote, first the marriage of Quenburga to the pious Alfred, but afterwards the conversion of Peada, and the alliance stipulated as its result to take place with Alfleda. More than this, he admitted Christianity among the Mercians, but in doing so forbade that the Pagan rites should be intermixed with those of the Christians, as had occurred in Essex. This fierce King is said to have "especially hated and despised those who, after they had embraced Christianity, lived in a manner unbecoming their profession," as did Eadbald and other converted princes of the Heptarchy, whom he regarded

[1] Britton and Brayley, Holinshed, Rapin, Lingard.

[2] The first three were Angles, the last an Irishman.—Bede, lib. iii. c. 21.

as "despicable wretches, who would not obey their God, in whom they believed."[1]

The Northumbrian missionaries were successful in propagating their belief. The Queen herself employed her influence over the heart of her husband in behalf of the Christian faith, and in seconding its apostles in their work among his subjects. Thus it is a most remarkable fact, that Mercia, as well as Kent and Northumberland, the three most considerable kingdoms of the Heptarchy, were indebted for conversion to the influence of the female sex.[2] Alfleda had only to recall to her mind the bright examples of Bertha and Ethelburga to receive encouragement in the glorious task. Peada, her amiable consort, the first Christian King of Mercia, was a prince of superior understanding, worthy of his exalted dignity, and possessed of talents which commanded the esteem and admiration of all who knew him.

The heart of Quenburga, Queen of Deira, like that of Alfleda, was more set upon the kingdom of heaven than on any earthly diadem. She was singularly devout and pious, and her exhortations prevailed with her husband, King Alfred, that they should live together as brother and sister, rather than as husband and wife: in those times such instances of devotion were esteemed the most exalted proof of religion.

Through the influence of the Queen of Deira, the court of Alfred became converted into a kind of monastic school, of regular discipline and Christian perfection, according to the prevalent notion.

Alfred, however, having died during his father's lifetime,[3] Quenburga returned to the dominions of Penda,

[1] Rapin, Roger of Wendover.
[2] Hume, Rapin. [3] Brit. Sancta.

her father. She had resolved to pass the residue of her days in religious seclusion, and selected for her retreat from the world, a town in the confines of Huntingdon and Northampton, called Dormund Caistor. That spot suited her inclination for retirement, but was not the most healthy, being in a moist and fenny situation. Some say that a monastery had already been built there by Prince Wulpher, her brother; but the general opinion is, that Quenburga herself founded the establishment for Christian virgins, over whom she presided as Abbess;[1] and this seems most likely, as the town, since called Caistor only, was changed, at that date, from the name of Dormund Caistor to Kunneburg-ceaster, or the town of Quenburga. Into this holy retreat the three sisters of the widowed Queen retired, the Princesses Keneswitha, Quendrida, and Idaburga, who were all consecrated at Godmanchester.[2]

Great changes, meanwhile, befell the Christian abbess, Quenburga. Her husband was dead, and she had devoted herself to God. She had now to mourn in solitude for the warfare and loss of her father Penda, his foe being her father-in-law, King Oswy. The particulars of this battle have already been related. Penda died as he had lived, a Pagan, and his death was that of a hero, on the battle-field. Thirty captains were slain fighting on the Mercian side on that eventful day, and those who did escape, of their party, were drowned in their flight, in the river Winwid.[3] Among the prisoners taken on the field of strife were the widowed Queen of Penda, Keneswitha, and Egfrid, her hostage, brother to Queen Alfleda.

[1] Dugdale, vol. vi., p. 1621. [2] Butler.
[3] Winwidfield, near Leeds.

These were painful tidings for the ears of the royal sisters of Mercia, to Penda and his consort, and the three sons of the deceased King. They were followed by a yet more tragical event, the sudden and mysterious death of Peada.[1] The catastrophe of his murder occurred during the festival of Easter, but the true author of the deed is unknown. Three persons stand charged with the crime. The amiable Alfleda, his consort, whose irreproachable life renders such a deed most improbable. Oswy's mistress, who was a Pagan, of whom Robert de Swapham, quoted by Speed, remarks, "this blot is taken from the Christian lady Alfleda, and brands the face of her that most deserveth it."

The third party accused of Peada's death, is his own mother, the captive Queen Keneswitha. This charge is so unlikely to be true, as to need no refutation. Of the three accused parties, Oswy's mistress seems most likely to have been guilty, and perhaps her daughter was made the tool of her intrigues on this occasion: this opinion derives strength from the fact, that on Peada's death, Oswy seized his dominions, and held them, with the rest of Mercia, till driven thence by Wulphere, brother of the deceased monarch. After the death of Peada, the name of Alfleda, his consort, disappears from the Chronicles.

It is worthy of remark, that the children of Penda, so notorious an opponent of Christianity, were all distinguished for their extraordinary piety. All his four sons, who in succession ruled over Mercia, actively supported the new doctrine, and their sisters became famous in the calendar of saints.[2]

St. Keneswitha was very young when she lost her

[1] Holinshed, Rapin, Robert de Swapham, Speed. [2] Ingulphus.

father, and having resolved to consecrate herself to God, she took the veil in the Monastery of Dormund caistor, over which her sister, the foundress, presided as first Abbess. Her elder sister, Quendrida, assumed the religious habit with her. These two young votaries are described by historians, as being "eminent for holiness."[1] As for their royal protectress and sister, Quenburga, she was "a mirror of sanctity, so that many virgins of all ranks and degrees resorted to her monastery, to be instructed in the rules and exercises of a religious life; and while the daughters of princes reverenced her as a mistress, the poor were admitted to regard her as a companion, and both the one and the other honoured her as a parent."

[1] Palgrave.

HERESWYTHA, SEXBURGA, ETHELDREDA, ERMENBURGE, AND ERMENILDA.

CONTENTS.

Religious enthusiasm—Church building—Queen Hereswytha, "the Mother of many Saints"—Her husband, King Anna—Etheldreda and Thonbert—She retires to a monastery—Her second marriage to Egfrid—Their establishment—Egfrid's remonstrance—Etheldreda goes to a convent, accompanied by Bishop Wilfred—Architecture and Church Music patronised by Wilfred—Anger of Egfrid—Their separation: he re-marries—Ermenburge persecutes Wilfred—Anglo-Saxon carriage—Wilfred's trials—Sexburga's piety—Her daughter—The Abbess Hildelitha—The Convent of Minstre—Ermenilda's, and her young daughter Werburga's, piety—Murder of the young princes, Wulfade and Rufin—Werburga's profession—The Abbess Etheldreda's edifying death—St. Audrey's lace, and St. Etheldred's chain—Ely Monastery—Sexburga's happy death—The butterfly shadow—Miracles—St. Werburga, the Patroness of Chester—Ely Cathedral—Antiquities—The stone cross of Etheldreda.

THE distinguishing feature of the seventh century was religious enthusiasm. It was a period when self-negation was looked upon as the prime virtue, and females in high positions thought it incumbent upon

them to devote their lives to self-sacrifices, of a nature which, in these days, do not carry with them the eminent character of virtue which they were then thought to bestow.

Monkish writers naturally enlarge on the holiness and purity of a life of celibacy, and infinite credit has been given to many persons in those remote ages, whose acts, considered by them worthy, were calculated to cause unhappiness and discontent to others. Of this kind was the conduct of several of the consorts of the Saxon monarchs, who, consenting to become wives, did not comprehend the duties of the state into which they had entered, and adopted the habits of recluses in the midst of a court; disappointing the hopes of the country, which looked to them to become the mothers of princes who should perpetuate the line of succession, and whose example of attachment and tenderness to the husbands they had accepted should afford an example to their female subjects.

Mistaken piety led many royal wives into a perfectly opposite course to what is an evident duty, and much inconvenience, as well as vexation, ensued in the State in consequence. But whatever are our present notions, the ascetic behaviour adopted at this early period of history was looked upon as a proof of every Christian virtue, and was probably a natural reaction from the licentiousness of Paganism.

Unbounded praise is bestowed by most Roman Catholic writers on those Queens who converted their palaces into nunneries, and looked upon their husbands as merely brethren of a community, whose earthly love it was their duty to repudiate, and with whom it was praiseworthy to live on terms of the strictest severity.

Occasionally the partners of these holy and religious ladies shared their enthusiasm, and devoted themselves to the same life; but in some cases it was different, and the whole country was thrown into a ferment in consequence of the domestic troubles ensuing.

To have erected and endowed a church or a monastery is always spoken of by early historians as the most praiseworthy of acts, and almost countless are the edifices raised in the seventh century to prove the zeal of the new converts to the true faith. The Queens of Ercombert, Egfrid, and Wulphere were not the least amongst those pious personages, who strove to gain the approbation of man and the favour of Heaven by expending enormous sums on religious buildings.

Not one of the princes of the Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy was more eminent for piety than Anna, King of East Anglia, who had sheltered Cenwalch from the indignant wrath of his fierce brother-in-law Penda, King of Mercia; nor was there a more excellent and amiable princess than Hereswytha, his consort, who for her own piety and the holiness of her offspring, has been entitled the "mother of many saints." Of her first husband, to whom she bore a son and a daughter,[1] no account is accurately given: three sons and three daughters were the offspring of her union with King Anna. The sons of Hereswytha were Jurminus, Adul-

[1] St. Sethrid, Hereswytha's daughter by the first husband, was honoured by the early English as a saint, though her name is not contained in any calendar. She succeeded St. Fara, abbess and foundress of Faremoutiers, in France, in her high office, and was honoured, on the 6th or 7th of May, as St. Sethrid, or Sessetrudis.—Butler's Lives, Jan. 10 and Dec. 7.

phus, and Erkenwald; her daughters were Ethelburga, Sexburga, Etheldreda, Oslave, and Withburga.

Sexburga, whose education had been carefully attended to (for women at this time were highly instructed), became the wife of Ercombert, King of Kent, who was remarkable both for his zeal in religion and his patriotism. He was first to establish the fast of Lent in his division of the Heptarchy, where he razed the temples of heathenism, and extirpated the idolatrous worship so long prevailing. Queen Sexburga encouraged her husband in all his religious undertakings, sharing in his exertions, and confirming his resolution by her counsel and example. "Thus," says the Chronicle, "while her virtue, humility, and devotion excited the admiration and reverence of the people, her goodness and unbounded charity gained for her more especially the love of the poor. Although she had married in obedience to the will of her parents, she would have preferred the cloister to a palace, a church to matrimony, and the service of Christ to worldly empire."[1]

Etheldreda[2] was the destined wife of Thonbert, an Englishman of noble birth. From her infancy she had been distinguished by her humility and devotion, which

[1] Bromton.

[2] The uncertainty of orthography in former times is well exemplified in the name of Etheldreda. Its abbreviation is Eldrude, a compound of Saxon and British, from "Ell," the reduplicative pronoun, and "drud," "illustrious" or "well-beloved."—Butler.

This word, however, is written indifferently—which is sufficiently confusing—Etheldrida, Etheldrith, Adelfrida, Adelthrid, Ediltrudis, or Audrey. The name of Etheldreda signifies "noble advice."* Hereswy*tha* is indifferently written with a *d* or *th*—the sound being the same.

* Camden.

led her, in conformity with a custom at that time enjoined by the Church, to take upon herself a vow of perpetual celibacy, devoting herself entirely to the service of Christ. This vow she never violated, though she twice entered the connubial state. She was induced to accept Thonbert for her nominal husband, in conformity with the wishes of her parents, and with him she is said to have lived for three years, as a holy sister, in accordance with her early vow. He was Prince of the Southern Girvii, having authority over Rutland, Northampton, and part of Lincolnshire, those districts being ruled by their own princes, who were subject to the Kings of Mercia. To this domain was added the Isle of Ely, upon his marriage with Etheldreda, to whom it was given as a bridal dowry.[1] At the end of two years, Etheldreda's father, King Anna, with his son Jurminus, was slain in battle by Penda, and the death of her husband followed shortly after. Returning into solitude, the young widow could now uninterruptedly devote herself to religious duties, and humble herself before Him who "loveth those whom he chasteneth."

Her mother Hereswyda, to whom she was tenderly attached, and who, on the death of King Anna, had retired to France with her own sister Hilda, and entered the Monastery of Chelles, died at this time.

The famous Monastery of Chelles, five leagues distant from Paris, on the Marne, though founded by Clotilda, Queen of France, was chiefly endowed by St. Bathilde, a Saxon Queen. Hilda had resolved to end her days in that establishment, but the loss of her sister broke the tie which bound her to the spot, and she suffered herself to be prevailed on by St. Aidan to return into Northumber-

[1] Butler, Bradshawe.

and, where she is afterwards distinguished as the Abbess of Whitby.

The deaths of Thonbert and of Hereswyda occurred in 655, and the year after Adulphus succeeded to the throne of his father Anna, Etheldreda remaining in Ely, occupying herself in "fasting, prayer, vigils, and penance." Vainly, however, did the widowed princess seclude herself from the world. The fame of her beauty and her virtue had spread, and attracted the attention of Egfrid, one of the most powerful Kings of the Saxon Heptarchy, who then governed Northumberland, and he desired to obtain her in marriage. Etheldreda, however, refused to become his wife,

"Though her sister Sexburge moened her tenderly;"

until the Prince urged his suit with such importunity, promising that her vow should be held sacred, that she yielded her consent;

"And at the maryage was great solempnyte,
Trumphes, honoures, on every side,
Great cost and royalte."[1]

Ely was probably the scene of the nuptial festivity, as King Egfrid came there to seek his bride.[2] Five years had been passed by Etheldreda in widowhood when, by her second espousals to Egfrid, she became Queen of Northumberland.

During twelve years from the date of this union, Etheldreda resided with her consort as his sister, not as his wife; for neither the affection of the husband, the authority of the king, or any other inducement, was of any avail in inducing her to break the vows she had made to Heaven. Egfrid, on the other hand, felt such respect for his wife, and was so much affected by

[1] Bradshawe. [2] Butler.

the example of her virtue, that he allowed her full liberty to fast, watch, and pray, and to devote her time to acts of piety and charity, during that space of time; but his own youth, and the great desire of his subjects that he should have heirs, at length led him to make representations, not indeed to Etheldreda herself, whose reproof he feared, but to Bishop Wilfred, who possessed the entire confidence of the Queen, and she was in the habit of consulting him on all occasions. Etheldreda had bestowed on him, with the consent of her husband, Hexham, which she is believed to have obtained as her own bridal dowry from Egfrid, for an episcopal see; and Wilfred built in it a church and monastery, the structure of which surpassed any in England. Italian architects, masons, and glaziers[1] were hired to assist in its erection, and it was furnished with plate and holy vestments, besides containing a large collection of the Lives of the Saints, and a noble ecclesiastical library.[2] Sacred music was first patronized in Northumberland in Etheldreda's time. St. Acca, a subsequent Bishop of Hexham, himself a learned musician and author of many literary productions, especially of a religious nature, retained in his service for twelve

[1] The art of making glass was known in Britain before the coming of the Romans, and improved by them. It was lost in the invasion of the Saxons, but afterwards imported among them, A.D. 664, for the ornament of churches and religious edifices, as Bede tells us, though not used till after the Conquest, in private dwellings. Specimens of Saxon glass may be seen in Westminster Abbey, cemented into the tomb of Edward the Confessor: they are small square or diamond-shaped pieces, not more than an inch in length, and lined with gold leaf. Similar ornaments were seen in a tomb discovered in repairing Rochester Cathedral, though of rather a later date.

[2] Lives of the Saints.

years a famous singer named Maban, by whose instructions the use of church music and singing of anthems was revived, and who introduced many Latin hymns before unknown in the northern churches.[1]

Several charitable institutions, founded in different parts of Wilfrid's diocese, were encouraged by Queen Etheldreda.

Bishop Wilfred, appealed to by Egfrid on the subject of Etheldreda's vow, did not feel at liberty to decline the commission intrusted to him of interfering in this matter, and accordingly addressed himself to the Queen on the subject of her husband's wish. Etheldreda now plainly perceived that the only method of enabling her to keep her resolution, was to endeavour to induce Egfrid to live in a state of separation from her; Wilfrid represented, accordingly, to the King that it was the desire of his wife to enter into the seclusion of a monastery. The prelate's entreaties and the importunity of Etheldreda herself at last extorted from the King a consent that she should depart from the court of Northumberland,[2] and follow her wish in this respect also. Having succeeded in gaining the consent of the King, Etheldreda took an important step, in which she was advised by Wilfred; she repaired to the Monastery of Coldingham, beyond Berwick, of which Ebba, "the King's aunt," was Abbess, and there professed herself a nun.[3] She

[1] Biog. Brit. This Acca was interred in Hexham Church, where one stone cross was placed at his head and another at his feet. When, three hundred years afterwards, his tomb was opened, his burial-clothes were found in a state of entire preservation, and a wooden tablet, of the form of an altar, was discovered, which had been placed on the breast of the deceased prelate. It was joined with silver nails, and bore an inscription. Such was the mode of interment in those days used for a bishop among the Angles.

[2] Bede, Milton, Lives of Saints.

[3] Holinshed.

received the veil from the hands of Wilfrid himself, and on the occasion expressed her joy by remarking "that she never thought herself a Queen till she was professed and thus solemnly contracted to the King of Heaven."[1]

Etheldreda remained for some time under the protection of the Abbess Ebba; but at the end of a year from the time of her profession, Wilfred informed the royal nun that Egfrid had formed a design, either by persuasion or compulsion, to make her return to his court. To avoid this alternative, Etheldreda quitted the convent and fled to the kingdom of East Anglia, for greater safety. She was accompanied in her journey by two maidens, and the monkish Chronicles inform us that at every place where they rested on their way thither, "our Lord showed them miracles."[2] It is supposed that Ovin, an old and faithful steward of the Queen, attended their flight.

Adulph, who is sometimes called the "natural brother of Etheldreda," received the fugitives; and in due course of time, Etheldreda, assisted by him, erected on her own estate, the Isle of Ely, a double monastery.[3] This edifice was founded in A.D. 672.[4] As soon as it

[1] Butler. [2] Lives of the Saints.

[3] Canwod Abbey.—Bradshawe.

[4] To this period may perhaps be ascribed the foundation of a structure by Etheldreda in the locality now known as Ely Place, Holborn. The work of that Queen has long since fallen to decay; but Shakespeare, on the authority of Holinshed, informs us that the Bishop of Ely dwelt at a palace in what is now called Ely Place—which residence was noted by some of our writers for its strawberry gardens, vineyards, and meadows. On the spot where Queen Etheldreda's foundation existed, was erected, in 1320, the antique chapel bearing her name, of which Newcourt, in his "Repertorium Londinense," written in 1700, says, "is, to this day, a very fair, large, old chapel."

was completed, Etheldreda assumed the government. Wilfrid himself attended in person at Ely, to assist at the ceremony of the Queen's election as abbess.

This prelate had, as it is natural to imagine, incurred the severe anger of Egfrid, nor was that anger appeased even after he had taken another wife. The new Queen was Ermenburge, sister-in-law to the King of Wessex,[1] who, unwilling to encourage so great a power as that possessed by Wilfrid in the kingdom, irritated the King still more against him; and her mortification at the freedom of the bishop's strictures on her violence of character, soon led to open hostilities between them.

Ermenburge[2] now employed every means to ruin Wilfrid in the King's opinion, and her task was the less difficult as Egfrid was already so much incensed. She gained also an ally in Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was induced to assist her views owing to misrepresentations, of which he afterwards became aware; for the present, however, he only listened to the grievances brought forward by the Queen, and was prevailed on to depose Wilfrid from his dignity, after he had spent ten years in endeavouring to establish the monastery of which he was the support. Richard, Prior of Hexham, speaking of Ermenburge, says: "In her heart Satan stirring up the seeds of hatred against the said bishop, by her tongue incited the King's mind to expel the priest;" and it appears that the Queen was the more displeased, because Hexham, part of Etheldreda's dowry received from Egfrid, had been bestowed on that prelate. It is plain that all parties, Queen as well as bishops, had an interested motive for the disgrace of Wilfrid.

[1] Eddius. [2] Lingard.

Accordingly Theodore parcelled out his great diocese, consecrating Bosa to the see of York, for the Deiri; Eata to that of Lindisfarne, for Bernicia; and Eadhead to the church of Lindissi, or great part of Lincolnshire, which Egfrid. had won from Mercia. This great division of Wilfrid's bishopric took place A.D. 678. Wilfrid on this appealed to the Pope. He raised no clamour, for he dreaded either disturbances or schism, but was sufficiently well acquainted with the canons to perceive the irregularity and nullity of many steps taken against him. He accordingly embarked for Rome, where having pleaded his own cause, he returned to England, and repairing to the presence of Egfrid, handed to him the sealed decrees of the Pope. That prince, having first caused them to be read by the prelates of his own faction, who were at that time present in the apartment, declared that they had been obtained by bribery, and commanded that Wilfrid should be committed to prison. The order was obeyed, and during the space of nine months Wilfrid was subjected to the most rigorous treatment. It is said, everything but the clothes which he wore was taken from him, and all his adherents were dispersed in different directions. Queen Ermenburge herself took possession of his case of relics, which she hung up in her chamber, and carried about with her in her chariot wherever she went, making an outward display of piety but little in accordance with her conduct.

The following curious account of a lady's carriage exists in an Anglo-Saxon MS. in the Harleian library. It represents the carriage of a lady of rank, of a rather later period than that of Ermenburge: "it has uprights fixed before and behind, with a body,

shaped like a hammock, suspended between; the whole, and in particular the spokes of the wheels, are painted with various colours. The lady to whom the gay vehicle belongs, wears on her head a double veil, and has a perforated mantle over the shoulders; her upper gown, which scarcely descends below the knees, is embellished with a border of needlework edged with beads. The sleeves descend only as far as the elbows, and are of considerable width, in shape resembling those now most fashionable. Beneath is worn an under garment, with long tight sleeves, reaching to the ground, so as almost to cover the feet.[1]"

Wilfrid's composure of mind is said to have been so great under his reverses, that his guards overheard him singing psalms in his dungeon: a bright light also is said "to have issued from that dark chamber, which alarmed his guards, and Wilfrid having performed an extraordinary cure on the sick wife of their governor, that person refused any longer to guard him; so that the King, for safety, removed him to another prison."[2]

At length Ermenburge was seized with a dangerous illness while staying at the Monastery of Ebba. The King's aunt was struck with the belief that her malady was caused by the indignation of Heaven for her conduct towards Wilfrid; a notion fostered by the abbess, on whose remonstrances at her injustice to that excellent prelate, Wilfrid was set at liberty, his relics restored, and his companions sent back to him, on condition, however, that the bishop should never more set foot within the territories of Egfrid. He accordingly retired from Northumberland, and solicited the protection of Brithwald, nephew to the King of

[1] Smith and Merrick. [2] Butler's Lives.

Mercia, who granted to him land, on which he built a monastery. Egfrid's emissaries, however, discovered this retreat, and the Mercian was alarmed by his threats; so that Wilfrid, unwilling to endanger his friend's safety, quitted his place of refuge, and fled into Wessex.[1] But Wilfrid's trials were not yet over; for Irmenigild, sister of his persecutress, was Queen of Wessex, and, influenced by Ermenburge, so harassed the prelate that he was glad to avail himself of the invitation of Ethelwald, King of Sussex, to reside in his dominions. One prince had remained his firm friend throughout, namely, Alfred, illegitimate brother of Egfrid. When, therefore, in 685, Egfrid was slain, Ermenburge's influence expired with him; as Egfrid had no issue, Alfred became his brother's successor on the throne, and Wilfrid was immediately reinstated in all his honours at Hexham, and appointed to the see of York and Monastery of Ripon.

For this the prelate was in a great degree indebted to Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, his former persecutor, then arrived at an advanced age, and subject to frequent fits of sickness. The Archbishop sent to Wilfrid, desired him to meet him at London, with St. Erkenwald, bishop of that city, brother of Etheldreda. In their interview he confessed all the actions of his past life, and observed, "the greatest remorse I feel is, that I consented with the King to deprive you of your possessions, without any fault committed on your part." He then earnestly entreated that he might be permitted to make all the restitution that was left in his power. Accordingly he wrote letters to King Alfred, to Ethelred, King of Mercia, and to Elfleda, Abbess

[1] Lingard.

of Whitby and others, and thus made ample amends to Wilfrid for his ancient hostility.

Queen Ermenburge, not long after her husband's death, A.D. 685, assumed the religious habit in the monastery of her sister, at Carlisle, founded A.D. 686.

The Farn island,[1] the largest of the group, and the nearest to the mainland, is celebrated for having been the residence of St. Cuthbert during nine years. "In that spot he devoted himself to prayer and fasting, after having borne the charge of the priorate of Lindisfarne, and thither numbers came to be edified."

The island on which he dwelt is about eleven acres in extent, and the basaltic rocks with which it is bordered rise abruptly, on the south-west side, to a height of about eighty feet above the sea: the north is entirely exposed to the winds and waves. The site of the buildings erected by the holy recluse has been ascertained, consisting of his oratory, cell, hospitium, and fountain; and the chapel, which had fallen into decay, was restored and roofed by Archdeacon Thorpe.

It is recorded that "when the coffin of St. Cuthbert was brought by the monks of Lindisfarne to the spot where the city of Durham is now built, no power could move it thence." The monastery was, therefore, of course, erected there.

Sexburga, after the death of Ercombert, had departed from England and repaired to France, accompanied by her unmarried sister Ethelburga, and her youngest daughter Ercongeca. Her eldest daughter, Ermenilda, had been previously married to Wulphere, King of

[1] Farne, is a corruption of the Celtic word *fahren*, a recess. Holy Island was called Lindisfarne, from the Lindis, a rivulet which empties itself into the sea from the opposite shore.

Mercia. Her sons were Egbert and Lothair, of whom, hereafter, mention will be made.[1]

Sexburga, her daughter and sister, all received the religious veil in France. At this time there were very few conventual establishments in Britain, and it was customary with the Anglo-Saxon princes and nobles to send their children into France to be educated in the monasteries there. The most celebrated of these establishments, which were really schools for education, and noted for resort by the English, were Faremoutiers, Briège, Andelie, and Chelles. Etheldreda, at some period of her life, is said to have resided at Faremoutiers:[2] perhaps it might have been while waiting for the completion of her edifice at Ely.

At the time the royal Princesses of England arrived, Hildelitha was Abbess of Faremoutiers. Ethelburga joined her pious flock, but was at a subsequent period recalled to her native country to assume the government of the celebrated Abbey of Barking, which had been built for her reception by her brother Erkenwald, Bishop of London, a princely prelate, whose virtues afterwards caused his relics to be worshipped in a famous shrine dedicated to him in St. Paul's Church.

Ercongeca made her profession either in Briège or

[1] Dugdale.

[2] St. Fara was the name of the foundress of the Monastery of Faremoutiers, and is supposed to have been the first abbess. Hildelitha, who afterwards presided there, returned to England to assist Ethelburga in the management of Barking Abbey. St. Sethrid, the daughter of Hereswyda, afterwards held the government of Faremoutiers, prior to her union with King Anna. Etheldreda is esteemed third Abbess of Faremoutiers. According to Holinshed, both Sethrid and Ethelburga became Abbesses of Briège.—See *ante*, p. 21, note.

Chelles; it is not known to which place Sexburga retired, though she seems to have spent the six following years in France. Sexburga, even during her husband's life time, had earnestly desired to devote herself exclusively to the service of God, in a state of religious seclusion; and in order that others, at least, might be enabled to attend on the divine service night and day without impediment, she had commenced erecting a nunnery in the isle of Sheppey, on the coast of Kent, having obtained a grant of land for that purpose. Some say that this was given by her son Egbert, who succeeded his father on the throne, but the building appears to have been commenced during the life time of Ercombert,[1] though not formed into a community till A.D. 664.[2]

The establishment consisted of seventy-four nuns in all, who were assembled there by the widowed Queen, who had either taken on herself previously the monastic vows and veil, or did so at this time, when in her own person she assumed the government of the monastery.

The ruins of this little edifice, called Minstre, in the isle of Sheppey, have survived the lapse of ages to commemorate their royal foundress. The buildings attached to the monastery were some twenty miles in compass. The original edifice was destroyed by the Danes, but rebuilt in 1130, and consecrated by William, Archbishop of Canterbury, to the honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Sexburga: it subsisted in the hands of Benedictine nuns till the dissolution of abbeys, at which time the "building of Minstre[3] was valued at the

[1] Dugdale says the edifice was completed in 675. Weever gives as the date 710 (an obvious error). Dugdale numbers the nuns at seventy-seven.

[2] Weever. [3] Ibid.

annual sum of 129*l.* 7*s.* 10½*d.*; some part of it is now converted into a parish church, in which are divers funeral monuments, supposed to have been removed out of the adjoining chapel, some of which make a show of wondrous great antiquity."

It is said, that a desire still further to seclude herself from the world afterwards induced Sexburga to seek the solitude of Ely, and to this may be added a wish to dwell under the same roof as Etheldreda, her much-loved sister, who had obtained even then an extraordinary reputation for sanctity. It would appear that this arrangement was made by Sexburga at the period of Wulphere's death, who had succeeded Penda on the throne of Mercia, and who, during the life time of Ercombert, had espoused her daughter Ermenilda,[1] Princess-Royal of the house of Kent.

Wulphere had heard of the virtues and piety of Sexburga's daughter with admiration,[2] and professing himself a Christian, undertook, at the time of his union with her, to extirpate the remnants of paganism from Mercia,[3] where the Christian faith had been already

[1] She (Ermenilda) was heiress-apparent to the dignity of her father's kingdom.—Bromton.

During her government of the Monastery of Minster, Sexburga's mind had to sustain a severe shock in the criminal conduct of her son, King Egbert, who was under the necessity of paying the were-gild, or fine, imposed on a murderer by the Saxon laws.

[2] William of Malmesbury, Butler.

[3] "There still remained, in the kingdom of Mercia, an excessive and inveterate Pagan barbarism. But Queen Ermenilda, the handmaid of God, having been instructed by her parents in the apostolic alphabet of the first teacher, St. Augustine, by her sweetness, by her soothing exhortations, by her manners and benefits, softened their untamed dispositions, and exhorted them to the sweet yoke of Christ and the rewards of everlasting blessedness; while the perverse and most rebellious she repressed by her power: nor did she rest until

ntroduced by his deceased brother Peada. Worldly motives delayed the performance of this promise, and "the humble and patient" Ermenilda strove in the interval to soften the fierce temper of her warlike husband. She educated her family in the pure principles of the Christian faith, and daily performed, with her only daughter Werburga, the whole of the church service. "This young princess, early distinguished for surpassing piety, was wont to spend many hours daily on her knees in private prayer; she also observed with diligence the fasts enjoined by the religion she professed."

The sons of Ermenilda were Wulphade, Rufin, and Kenred, who emulated their mother's example of virtue and goodness. These Princes were taught in the faith of Christ by St. Chad, who also baptised them. This prelate was Bishop of Litchfield, and had a cell or hermitage in a forest, to which the young Princes were at times accustomed to resort for instruction. The ill-fated youths were, however, destined to come to an untimely end. The circumstances which led to their sad fate were these: Werbode was a knight of Wulphere's court, very powerful, and his influence was great over the mind of Wulphere, to whom he had rendered great services in arms; so that he readily obtained his promise to give him the beautiful Princess Werburga, his daughter, provided her own consent could be obtained. The news of Wulphere's promise much grieved the Queen and her sons, who all confirmed Werburga in her refusal of his suit, more particularly Ermenilda; for Werbode was a pagan, and had induced Wulphere to waver in his intentions regarding the true faith, and at

she extirpated the idols and demoniacal rites, and filled the kingdom of the Mercians with churches and priests."—Bromton's Chronicle.

length to renounce it and follow the worship of idols. When the knight found that these young Princes stood in his way to Werburga's favour, he resolved on their death. An opportunity soon offered. He discovered that the royal youths visited St. Chad[1] at times, under pretence of hunting; and contrived that Wulphere should be stationed in a place where he could see his sons pass on one of these occasions, having previously informed him of their secret religious object. The King's passion at beholding them on such a mission was so furious, that he gave an order for their execution; but no sooner was the cruel deed perpetrated, than he was filled with remorse and penitence, and though too late to redeem the loss of his children, threw himself on the pity and devotion of the Queen and St. Chad, and having entered into commune with himself, became a convert to the Christian doctrine, abolished heathenism in Mercia, and by his endeavours and example, propagated the Christian faith. The bodies of Wulfade and Rufin were placed by the Queen in a sepulchre of stone, and over the spot where they were interred this afflicted mother and her penitent husband founded the Priory of Stone.[2] Wulphere afterwards founded Peterborough Cathedral.

The beautiful Werburga had resolved to devote her life to the service of God, and had refused on that account many suitors for her hand, amongst whom was the Prince of Wessex, who waited upon her with rich presents, to receive the same answer as other aspirants.

Upon the change which took place in the religious

[1] "Chad travelled about, not on horseback, but, after the manner of the Apostles, on foot, to preach the Gospel in towns, the open country, cottages, villages, and castles."—Bede.

[2] In Staffordshire.—Stowe, Leycester, Butler.

views of the King, Werburga no longer dreaded his resentment, and ventured to disclose to her father her intention of embracing the religious profession. To this Wulphere was averse, and testified much grief; but so earnest were the supplications of the Princess, that he at length yielded to her wish.

"Wulphere, in person, conducted his beloved child to Ely in great state, accompanied by his whole court. On their arrival there, they were met at the gate of the monastery by the royal abbess, St. Etheldreda, with the whole of her religious family in procession, singing holy hymns. Werburga, falling on her knees, then begged to be admitted as a penitent. She obtained her request, and Te Deum was sung, after which she went through the usual trials with great humility and patience, exchanging with joy her rich coronet, purple silks, and gold, for a poor veil and a coarse habit, and resigned herself into the hands of her superior, to live only to Christ. King Wulphere, his three brothers, and Egbert, or Egbright, the Kentish King, Adulph, King of East Anglia, and the great lords of those respective states, were all present at the solemn ceremony, being entertained by the Mercian King with a truly regal magnificence."[1]

Meanwhile Etheldreda, as Abbess of Ely, afforded the holy sisterhood over whom she presided, a constant example of Christian perfection. She was very strict in the duties of her religion, eating only once a day, except on great festivals or in times of sickness. "She would rarely wash in a hot bath, unless just before any of the great festivals, as Easter, Whitsuntide, and the Epiphany; and then she did it last of all, after having,

[1] Butler.

with the assistance of those about her, first washed the other servants of God then present."[1] She was in the habit of wearing woollen clothes, never making use of linen; and it was her custom never to return to bed after matins, which were sung at midnight, but to continue in the church at her devotions until morning. She seems to have rejoiced in pains and humiliations. The physician, Cynefrid, who attended her in her last illness, and was present at her death, relates that she had a very great swelling under her jaw, which he was ordered to lay open. This operation performed, she was more easy for two days, so that many thought she might recover. At the time she had suffered most pain, she had been much pleased with that sort of distemper, and said: "I know that I deservedly bear the weight of my sickness on my neck; for I remember, when I was very young, I bore there the needless weight of jewels; and therefore I believe the Divine Goodness would have me endure the pain in my neck, that I may be absolved from the guilt of my needless levity, having now, instead of gold and precious stones, a red swelling and burning on my neck." The third day after the incision made by her physician, "the former pains returning, she was soon snatched out of the world, and exchanged all pain and death for everlasting life and health."[2]

Etheldreda had fulfilled her duties as abbess for seven years, and she was deeply mourned by her little flock, who were sincerely attached to her for her many virtues and goodness.[3] The 23rd of June, the anniversary of her death, which took place A.D. 679, has ever since been esteemed her festival day, in which the

[1] Bede. [2] Ibid. [3] Fuller's Church History of Britain.

honours of a saint are accorded to her, and her name may still be seen in English prayer-books as St. Audry. "At a fair held on the causey, in the isle of Ely, which is called St. Audry, much ordinary but showy lace was usually sold, whence St. Audry's lace became quite proverbial, and passed into the corruption of *Tawdry*, a word used to denote not lace only, but any other part of the female costume which was gaudy in appearance.[1] A certain chain also, made of fine small silk, bears the name of St. Etheldred's Chain, perhaps in allusion to the necklaces worn by the Queen, when a child, at the East Anglian court. The Saxon women had several ornaments for the arms and neck, similar to that ascribed to Etheldreda, studded with brilliants, collars, earrings, and bracelets; these a mother was permitted by law, at her death, to leave to her daughter; and by the same legal authority had the right of conveying to her son, her land, slaves, and money.

Sexburga, after her sister's death,[2] presided as Abbess of Ely for twenty years, with great advantage to the convent and neighbourhood. In her time the structure of that venerable building, of which the ruins alone at present afford a noble specimen of Saxon architecture, was completed. As soon as the building was in a fit condition, Sexburga removed the holy remains of the Abbess into it. By the particular desire of the Abbess-Queen, her body had been placed in a coffin of wood; from this her humility is plainly to be discovered, for persons of

[1] Clavis Calendaria.

[2] Drayton writes thus of her:—

"Sexburg, some time queen to Ercombert of Kent,
Tho' Ina's loved child, and Audrey's sister known,
Which Ely in those days did for her Abbess own."

Polyolbion.

consequence in her days alone were interred in stone coffins. Queen Sexburga, her sister, performed the interesting task of translating her relics, in 694, in the sixteenth year of her own government at Ely. Bromton, in his Chronicle, tells us that St. Sexburga, "inflamed by a divine zeal, prepared to have her venerable bones transferred to the church; and not having a stone suitable for concealing so heavenly a treasure, of her kindness appointed certain to seek a stone of the kind, and having found one, to bring it by ship to the Monastery of Ely; for the isle of Ely is, by the nature of the place, entirely surrounded by waters and marshes, whence it is destitute of stones of the sort.[1] They applied to a small town at no great distance, named Grantchester,[2] which was at that time much reduced, and but scantily inhabited; by the well of which they found, as it were prepared by Providence, a stone exactly suited for the sepulchre, wherein, afterwards, a certain grace of the Divine operation was very remarkable, since it appeared that the quantity of the stone thus providentially found was, as if purposely, exactly that required by the dimension of the virgin's body. They found, also, a lid very like a sarcophagus, likewise of the appearance of marble, and of the proper size and evenness, and without any incongruity or dissimilarity of the parts."

[1] There were no quarries in Ely, but the brethren were sent by Sexburga into Cambridgeshire, to procure a stone coffin, which they were ordered to fashion with their own hands. The stone they discovered was found to fit exactly the size of the virgin abbess's body, having in it a hollow place, equally adapted to the size of the head. The coffin found for Etheldreda was a relic of ancient Roman art: it was a white marble coffin, most beautifully wrought.– Polwhele Bede.

[2] Near Cambridge.

Having fulfilled this purpose, they returned without meeting any obstacle. "Whereon Sexburga, rejoicing in the benefit of the divine gift, blessed God, who doeth wonderful things. Now when the day determined upon for transferring the body of the holy virgin from a wooden coffin to the stone mausoleum arrived, on opening the previous coffin the venerable body was found entire, without any sign of corruption, as though it had been recently buried on the same day. The blessed Wilfred, Archbishop of York, was present at this spectacle. There was also, for the greater evidence and certainty of the truth, the aforesaid physician, Kinefrid, who had been present at her death, and had opened the tumour of which she died. He, recollecting the wound which he had formerly made on her body, approaching and carefully examining it, recognised it to be the same, wondering at the marvellously curative power of God on the dead; for there remained of the scar only the slightest mark, the size of a thread, and that becomingly surrounded and concealed with what might be *the shadow of a butterfly*. The brethren stood on one side, and the sisters on the other, blessing God with hymns and praises; while St. Sexburga entered with a few, religiously and devoutly to wash the remains of her sister, and after a short space called out from within: 'Glory be to the name of the most high God.' And that what was done might be with the approbation and in the presence of witnesses, she summoned certain who were more worthy of participating in so great secrets, who, on the removal of the pall and the exposure of the countenance, beheld the body of the virgin undecomposed, and more like one sleeping than dead. At length, having carefully wrapped the body in precious vest-

ments suitable to preserve so great a treasure, with a great and manifold chorus of exultation, they carry it to the church, and place it in a new sarcophagus with honour."[1]

Many miracles are said to have been wrought afterwards, by the devout application of the relics of St. Etheldreda, and of the linen cloths taken off her coffin.[2]

The venerable Bede has written a Latin poem[3] on the discovery of the relics of St. Etheldreda, which is a curious specimen of the literary composition of the times in which he lived.

It is not quite certain whether Ermenilda retired to Sheppey during the life of Wulphere, and took her mother's government of the monastery there; or whether she deferred entering on a religious life till the death of her consort, which took place in 675. Wulphere was interred at Litchfield,[4] and as his only surviving son, Kenred, was still too young to govern, he left the crown to his own brother Ethelred.

One of our early chroniclers writes thus of the royal widow: "Upon the famous King Wulphure, therefore, after a reign of seventeen years, passing to the eternal kingdom, although his pious wife Ermenilda bewailed her social calamity, nevertheless, with her whole soul wounded in love, she exulted in the liberty of Christ. She forthwith betook herself to the most excellent Monastery of Ely, where her parent Sexburga, daughter of Anna, King of the East Angles, and sister of St. Etheldred, among bands of virgins, was shining as the moon among

[1] Chron. Bromton, Reg. Northumb., Bede.

[2] Butler. Bede relates this account in the words of Kinefrid, the physician.

[3] Eccles. Hist., lib. iv., c. 20.

[4] The word "Litchfield" means, in the Saxon, "Field of the Dead."—Dr. Johnson.

stars, and where her daughter Werberga humbly served God in virgin integrity. Here, therefore, this Ermenilda laid aside all earthly hope and regal ornaments, and put on the yoke and armour of Christ, with the religious habit of the monastics." As Abbess of the Monastery, after Sexburga's death, Drayton writes of her thus:—

> "King Wulphere's widowed pheere, Queen Ermineld, whose life
> At Ely is renowned;"

while Bradshawe, in even more courtly language, styles her "a noble Margaryte of high magnificence," and a "rose of paradise full of pre-eminence."[1]

Sexburga departed this life on the 6th of July, 699, at an advanced age. Her remains were deposited near those of her sister, in the Cathedral Church of Ely,[2] though some have thought her interment took place at Canterbury, where her husband, King Ercombert, lies entombed.

Ermenilda was third Abbess of Ely, but could not have become so till twenty-four years after her husband Wulphere's death, when she must have been very aged. This venerable Princess is compared, by Drayton, to her cousin Ermenburga, wife of Merowald, Wulphere's brother, in the following stanzas:—

> "Two holy Mercian queens so widowed, saints became;
> For sanctity much like, not much unlike in name."

Ermenilda passed to the heavenly kingdom in the month of February, A.D. ——,[3] when her remains were interred with those of her mother and aunt, and, as Bromton expressed it, "having been tossed, she rested in the Lord."

[1] Life of St. Wereburga. [2] Millar.

[3] February 13th, on which day she was, after death, honoured among the English female saints.

Werburga, her successor, the fourth Abbess of Ely, was induced by the persuasions of her uncle, King Ethelred of Mercia, to quit that establishment, for the purpose of undertaking the general charge of the religious foundations throughout Mercia, in which he desired to establish a strictly monastic discipline. Through the liberality of Ethelred, the Abbess Werburga founded several monasteries: those of Trentham and Hanbury, in Staffordshire, and another at Weedon, a royal palace of Northamptonshire.[1] She herself resided at Hearburg, near Stamford, or at Croyland. At the time she died, Werburga was at Trentham; but by her own express wish, her remains were conveyed to Hanbury for interment. The author of her Life assures us that her relics were venerated at Croyland till the ninth century, when they were removed to Leicester.

In 708, nine years after the death of Werburga, her body was taken up, in presence of King Ceolred, his council, and many bishops, when it was found incorrupt and entire, and placed in a costly shrine. In the reign of King Alfred, the shrine of St. Werburga, for fear of the Danes, was carried to West Chester; and the valiant Ethelred, Earl of Mercia, who had married the daughter of that monarch, built and endowed with secular canonries a stately church, as repository for these holy relics, which afterwards became the cathedral. The body of the saint fell to dust, soon after its translation to West Chester.

[1] Weedon, once the royal site of Wulphere's palace, was afterwards converted into a nunnery, at the entreaty of Werburga, who presided over it. The Danes destroyed the edifice; but Werburga's memory was preserved by a fair chapel there, dedicated to her sainted memory.—Green's Worcester, Pennant.

St. Werburga is considered the especial patroness of the city of Chester; and Malmesbury tells us, that "the praises and miracles of these two women (Ermenilda and Werburga), and particularly of the younger, are there extolled and had in veneration; and though they are favourable to all petitions without delay, yet they are more especially kind and assistant to the supplications of women and youths." He speaks of a circumstance which occurred in his own time. "This St. Werburga lies at Chester, in the monastery of that city, which Hugo, Earl of Chester, ejecting a few canons, who resided there in a mean and irregular manner, *has recently erected.*"

The relics of Werburga being scattered in the reign of Henry VIII, her shrine was converted into the episcopal throne in the same church, and remains in that condition to this day, being "one of the most remarkable monuments in the county of Cheshire, and a rich specimen of Gothic architecture in the early part of the fourteenth century. This monument itself is composed of stone, ten feet high, embellished with thirty curious antique images of Kings of Mercia, and other princes related to this saint, the names of whom were inscribed upon scrolls held in their hands. These figures, having been much mutilated, either at the Reformation or during the civil war, were restored, but in a bungling manner, about the year 1708.[1]"

Some further account is here necessary of the Cathedral Church of Ely. Many abbesses in succession followed Werburgh in the establishment there, whose names, however, are not on record till A.D. 870, when the monastery was ravaged by the Danes, and shortly

[1] Lysons's Mag. Britannia; Willis's Abbeys; Butler.

after occupied by a college of secular priests. In the reign of King Edgar the Abbey was refounded by Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, and the structure appropriated to the use of monks only of the Benedictine order, though the dedication was made in the name of "the Blessed Virgin and St. Audry."[1]

The following is one of the narratives of the monks respecting the relics of their holy foundress: On a former occasion, the corpse of Etheldreda was seen through a hole which the Danes broke in her coffin: a priest, more forward than the rest, prying too busily, and endeavouring to pull the envelope out by a cleft stick, the saint drew back the drapery so hastily, that she tript up his heels, and gave him such a fall as he never recovered, nor his senses, afterwards. Bishop Athelwold stopt up the hole, and substituted monks for the priests. Abbot Brithnoth transferred hither the body of Withburga, the foundress's sister; and when, afterwards, in the time of Abbot Richard, some doubts were entertained about the incorruptibility of the foundress, nobody presumed to examine her body, but they contented themselves with uncovering that of her sister, who was found to be in such good preservation, that she seemed more like a person asleep than dead: a silk cushion lay under her head; her veil and vestments all seemed as good as new, her complexion clear and rosy, her teeth white, and her lips somewhat shrunk.[2]

In 974, when the Monastery of East Dereham, in Norfolk, which King Anna had founded for his daughter Withburga, was destroyed by the Danes, the remains of that princess were translated to Ely, and interred

[1] Millar's Cathedral of Ely.

[2] Gough's Sepulchral Monuments, from Malmesbury de Gestis.

with those of her sisters, Sexburga and Etheldreda. The regal remains of the three ladies, and of Ermenilda, were afterwards removed into the new church of Ely by Abbot Richard,—a solemn and imposing ceremony. Edgar Atheling, and some of the English nobles, having previously defended the isle of Ely against William the Conqueror, that warlike prince paid a visit to the convent, and made an offering at the altar of St. Etheldreda,[1] which is dedicated to St. Peter and St. Etheldreda.

The foundation of the present Cathedral Church of Ely was laid in the reign of Henry the First, son of William; and history, which gives us the accurate date of each portion of this interesting structure, assigns the latest part of the building to the year 1534. The removal of the choir, which took place in 1770, was a very great improvement. The original choir contained the relics and shrines of St. Etheldreda, Sexburga, Ermenilda, and Withburga; it was bounded by a stone screen, and niches still remain in the columns to mark the place whence it was removed. It is said that Bishop Mawson had agreed with an artist to fill the window of the choir with modern stained glass. The middle light of the five was to have contained a whole-length figure of St. Etheldreda, and below it the royal arms: the others were likewise to have had their embellishments. This agreement was made not long before Bishop Mawson's death. He had advanced a considerable sum of money, and sufficiently provided by his will for the rest. The artist, however, was unable to fulfil his contract; a part had, however, been accomplished, and was put up. The heads of St. Paul

[1] Dugdale.

and St. Etheldreda were completed, which are in two windows in a room at the Deanery.

Later improvements, even in our own times, have been made in this noble edifice. A magnificent painted window was presented to it by the Rev. Bowyer Sparke, one of the canons of the church. It occupies the south-east angle of the lantern, and is of noble dimensions, being forty feet in height. It is designed to commemorate the foundress, by representations of her marriage, and of her consecration as abbess; whilst the four great lights of the window contain, under gorgeous canopies, the figures of Etheldreda as Queen, her father Anna, King of the East Angles, her first husband Thonbert, King of the Girvii, and her second husband Egfrid, King of Northumberland: in the second row, she appears as Lady Abbess of Ely, with Wilfrid, Archbishop of York, by whom she was consecrated, and her successors in the government of the monastery, Sexburga and Ermenilda. This great and beautiful work was completed by Mr. William Wailes, of Newcastle, in little more than three months, at a cost of 600*l.*[1]

[1] Millar's Cathedral of Ely.

"The same liberal benefactor* proposes to present another painted window, by the same artist, to the south transept, and the church is likewise indebted to him for originating, by a noble gift, the restoration of the south-west transept, which has added so greatly to the beauty of the cathedral. The design for the eight great windows at the east end of the choir, for filling which with painted glass the late Bishop Sparke left 1500*l.*, is nearly completed. Mr. A. B. Hope has undertaken to restore one of the pinnacles of the east end of the church; Lady Mildred Hope to restore the beautiful cross in the eastern gable, and the crocketting which leads

* Mr. William Wailes.

The lover of English antiquities will linger with delight, to trace, in "that beautiful part of the building called the "Octagon," several of the most important historical passages in the life of the pious Etheldreda. These events are depicted upon small clusters of very slender columns, which connect the arches of this part of the building. Beginning at the right side of the north-west arch, the first of these represents her reluctant marriage with Egfrid; the second, her taking the veil in the Monastery of Coldingham; the third, her pilgrim's staff taking root while she slept by the way, and bearing leaves and shoots; the fourth, her preservation, with her attendant virgins, on a rock surrounded by a miraculous inundation, when the King pursued her with his knights, to carry her off from her monastery; the fifth, her instalment as Abbess of Ely; the sixth, her death and burial; the seventh, a legendary tale of one Brithstan, delivered from bonds by her merits, after she was canonized; the eighth, the translation of her body.

There yet exists in Ely Cathedral, a relic of very great antiquity; it is the lower part of a stone cross with its square pedestal, found many years ago at Haddenham, in the isle of Ely, and placed by Mr. Bentham, historian of the building, in the west end of the southern aisle, under an arch in the wall. The inscription on the pedestal is very legible.

up to it; and Mr. H. R. Evans, who has been so long and so honourably connected with the chapter, as steward of the manors, &c., has undertaken to defray the expense of opening and restoring the great lantern of the western tower, which is now concealed by a plaster vault to the floor of the bell-chamber, and of thus bringing into view the most beautiful system of Norman arcading which is to be found in any cathedral in this kingdom."—Bury Paper.

This cross was erected to the memory of Ovin, the steward and minister of Queen Etheldreda, a monk of great merit, who had accompanied her from the province of the East Angles; and the cross itself is supposed to be a work of the latter end of the seventh, or the very beginning of the eighth century.[1]

[1] Description of Ely Cathedral; Brit. Sancta.

DOMNEVA.

CONTENTS.

Lady Eva—Marriage with the son of Penda—The Queen takes the veil in her husband Merowald's life—She founds the Abbey of Minstre, to atone for the murder of her brothers by Egbert—"The Deer's course"—Pious *ruse*—Fate of Thunor the murderer—The humility of Mildred—Leobgitha's verses—Gold and silver ink—The Abbess Eadburga—The letters of St. Boniface to the pious Abbess—The Danes—Mildgitha retires to Estrey—Estrey Court—The sepulchres of the murdered princes there—Mildburga and her father—Their tombs in the Abbey of Wenlock.

DOMPNEVA, or Domneva, appears to be a Roman abbreviation of Lady Eva, or Domina Eva,[1] of which an instance occurs in the name of Julia Domna, wife of Severus. Ermenburga, Eva, or Dompneva, are used indiscriminately for the Queen of Merowald, son of Penda, in our histories: as there is another Ermenburga, Queen of Egfrid, this abbreviation is adopted to distinguish her from others. Ermenred Clito, King of

[1] Written indiscriminately, Dumnona, Dompnena, Dormenilda and Dormengylda.

Kent, had by his wife Oslave, daughter of King Anna, another daughter besides Dompneva, who was called likewise Ermenburga,[1] and one called Eormengitha, both of whom became nuns: his sons were called Ethelred and Ethelbright.[2]

Merowald, who was destined to marry Domneva, was King of Herefordshire, or the West Hecanas,[3] over which he had reigned three years. Both this princess and her cousin Ermenilda seem to have been given by their parents in marriage to the Mercian princes, sons of Penda, in the hope of securing a friendship between that royal house and the East Anglian.

At this period the kingdom of Kent had arrived at the highest pinnacle of greatness: the glorious Ethelbert and his amiable consort had transmitted their virtues to their descendants. The alliance of the royal family of Kent was sought with avidity by the other princes of the Heptarchy. It has been seen that the Princess Enfleda had married Oswy of Northumberland, and Etheldreda, the sister of Sexburga and Oslave, became the wife of Egfrid. Domneva and Ermenilda united the kingdoms of East Anglia, Kent, and Mercia. These matrimonial alliances are, in fact, a key by which alone the history of the Saxon Heptarchy can be properly understood.

In spite, however, of her marriage, and, it is said, by the consent of her husband, Queen Domneva assumed the religious veil:[4] it appears that she became Abbess of Minstre, in Thanet, about the year 670, King Mero-

[1] Ebba or Eaba, Eva or Gaffe, as the name is spelt indifferently in the same Saxon manuscript; it is sometimes written Eadburge, Idaburga, and Elburg; St. Ebba is also at times converted into St. Tabbs.—Butler.

[2] Speed, Rapin. [3] Lappenberg's An lo-Saxons. [4] Brit. Sancta.

wald being yet upon the throne. The circumstances which occasioned the erection of this famous monastery are remarkable; and as Domneva was herself the foundress and first abbess, they belong especially to her history.

The two brothers of Queen Domneva had been committed by their dying father, Ermenred, to the care of their uncle Ercombert, King of Kent, who, as long as he lived, fulfilled the sacred trust reposed in him with the honour which might have been expected from so excellent a prince; but when he died, his power, and with it the guardianship of the young Ethelred and Ethelbert, who were still in their minority, devolved on his son Egbert, who regarded these princes, his cousins, as dangerous rivals to his power. He is accused of having employed a Thane, named Thunor, to put the orphans to death;[1] and to prevent discovery of the crime, directed that their bodies should be interred beneath the royal throne in the palace of Estry, in Thanet, the place where they were usually residing under his protection. Heaven, however, would not permit such a crime to escape detection, nor suffer Egbert to pursue in security his guilty career. It is related that a miraculous light, falling on the spot where the bodies of the ill-fated brothers had been deposited by their murderer, revealed their holy relics; and the alarmed monarch was induced, by the united representations of St. Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, and St. Adrian, Abbot of St. Augustine's, whose councils were seconded by the clamours of the people, to send into Mercia to seek pardon of Domneva, Queen of Merowald, the sister of his victims, for the heinous

[1] Sax. Chron., Sim. Dunelm.

crime he either perpetrated or permitted, and to offer to indemnify her for their loss by the usual Weregild, or compensation for murder.[1]

The custom of paying a blood-fine, called Weregild or Manbôt, did not belong solely to the Saxons. Compositions for murder existed among the Jews, and also the Greeks, as is apparent from Nestor's speech to Achilles, in the Iliad; and even till a recent period among the natives of Ireland the same custom prevailed, the price of a man's head being termed by them his *erie*.[2] Spencer, in his "View of the State of Ireland," writes thus of these cases of composition for murder: "The Brehon, that is, their judge, will compound between the murderer and the friends of the party murdered which prosecute the action, that the malefactor shall give to them, or to the child or wife of him that is slain, a recompense, which they call an Eriach; by which vile law of theirs many murders amongst them are made up and smothered. And this judge being, as he is called, the Lord's Brehon, adjudgeth, for the most part, a better share unto his lord, or the head of that sept (or family), and also unto himself for his judgment, a greater portion, than unto the plaintiffs or parties grieved."

On the arrival of Queen Domneva in Kent, Egbert appeared before her in a very sorrowful manner, imploring her pardon, and laying before her a great many rich presents. The Queen generously pardoned her royal cousin, but declined accepting any of his offerings: her request to him was, that he would grant her a place "in Tenet," where she might build a monastery in memory of her two brothers, with a competent maintenance, in which she might, with the virgins

[1] Butler. [2] Sir John Davies.

devoted to God and obliged to her, pray to the Lord to pardon and forgive the King for their murder. Egbert assenting, asked the Queen "how much land she desired to have?" who replied, "only as much as my deer can run over at one course." This being accorded, the animal was let loose at a place called Westgate, in presence of the King, and many of his nobles and people, who all crowded towards the spot where the deer was led in expectation of the event. Among the spectators was Thunor, the King's agent, and the real murderer of the Princes, who cried out that Domneva was a witch, and the King a fool for suffering so noble and fruitful a soil to be taken from him by the decision of a brute. Whilst the King and others around him were diverted with seeing the deer run, "this man endeavoured to put her by, with riding across and meeting her." While thus endeavouring to defeat the pious object of Domneva, the wrath of God fell on him; for as some say, "the earth opened and swallowed him," or, as we may with greater credibility receive it, "a fall from his horse" occasioned his death; the spot being ever after called "Tunor's Leap," while the place where he was buried yet bears the name of this wretched man. At the sight of the signal judgment which had fallen on Thunor, the King is said to have "very much feared and trembled."[1]

Thunor's Leap was, according to Lewis, the old chalk-pit, which he supposes to have been first sunk when the Abbey and Church of Minstre were built, the bottom of which, in process of time, became overgrown with grass, when the crafty monks invented this fable to frighten the poor people of the neighbourhood.

[1] Chron. of Thorne.

Immediately adjoining this spot formerly stood a beacon, it being some of the highest land in that locality, and it was here that King Egbert had taken up his position, in order that he might be able to see the deer run almost all the way.[1] "The Deer's Course," as it is called by the monks, was nothing more than a lynch or balk, cast up as a boundary, to divide the two capital manors of Minstre and Monkton, in the island, and very probably existed even before the former was granted to Domneva.

"The tame deer of the Queen was to obtain for her royal mistress as much land as it could run over at a breath; the favourite animal having finished her course, from one side of the island to the other, and run over in length and breadth forty-eight plough lands (or ten thousand acres), followed the Lady Domneva, while the King, on his part, returned thanks to Christ Jesus and surrendered to his illustrious cousin the whole tract of land which the deer had run over; St. Theodore, the devout Adrian, and others who were present, hallowing the gift with their blessing."[2] This donation Egbert afterwards confirmed to the ecclesiastical posterity of Domneva by charters, recorded in the Book of St. Augustine's,[3] to the infringers of which he added a frightful curse.

Domneva accordingly founded her new minster, dedicating it to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to the name and honour of her murdered brethren.[4] A difference of opinion exists as to the exact date of the foundation, some saying it was commenced in 664 and completed in 670

[1] Lewis. [2] Thorne, Weever.

[3] Weever had himself seen these charters, as he assures us in his work.

[4] Butler, Weever.

others that it was commenced only at the latter year.[1] It has again been doubted whether Queen Domneva herself ever ruled the establishment. Drayton says she passed the residue of her days—

"Immonaster'd in Kent, where first she breathed the air;"

yet we afterwards trace her as president of another religious community in Mercia. It is, however, highly probable that on the completion of the structure, Domneva superintended it until the arrival of her daughter, St. Mildred, who had been sent to France, to the Monastery of Chelles, for her education, that she might be fitly prepared to govern the edifice of her mother's foundation.[2] All things being made ready for her, Mildred was sent for, as the person most fit for the situation of abbess; and on her arrival the Mercian Princess was consecrated to that holy office by Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, having previously taken the veil at the Monastery of Chelles. Seventy young women at the same time received the nun's veil, to form a com-

[1] Dugdale, Thorne. Leland is wide of the mark in naming 596 and also Speed, who says Queen Ermenburga (or Dompneva) lived A.D. 590; these dates would, as Dugdale remarks, have been long before her time.

[2] The Church of Minster is the most ancient structure in the island of Thanet, and has three aisles; in the choir are eighteen collegiate stalls; on the floor of the church, and under the porch, are several large flat gravestones, of very great antiquity; on the top of the spire of the steeple was formerly a globe, above which rose a cross, covered with lead, and upon this a vane, surmounted by a cross of iron, emblem of the power and superiority of Christianity over the earth; but these fancied monuments of idolatry were removed in the year 1647, by one Calmer, a rigid Calvinist, who had obtained the sequestration of the living by the refusal of Dr. Casaubon to take the covenant.—Dugdale. Minster was sometimes called St. Mildred's Monastery.—Weever.

munity for their royal mistress, having been selected either from birth or merit. Among the number was Ermengitha, the aunt of Mildred, who was afterwards so much renowned for piety that her tomb, about a mile distant from the monastry, became a favourite resort for devout pilgrims.[1]

Mildred behaved with so much humility amongst her followers and pupils, as rather to make herself their servant than their mother and mistress; for she desired more to be loved than to be feared; and much more effectually brought her sisters on the way of religious perfection by her example than by her authority.[2] This abbess was celebrated as a saint after her death, and in her honour two parish churches in London were dedicated, St. Mildred's in the Poultry and St. Mildred's in Bread-street. According to Wilson's English Martyrology, St. Mildred died in 664; but this is an error, for she was not till after that Abbess of Minster, and her name is to be found subscribed in the Council of Beckenham, A.D. 694.[3] This great council was held by Withred, King of Kent, and Berthwald, Archbishop of Canterbury, and in it many things were concluded in favour of the Church. Five Kentish abbesses were present on the occasion, and not only subscribed their names and crosses to the constitutions concluded therein, but their subscriptions were placed not only before and above all presbyters, but also above that of Botred, a bishop present in the council. These abbesses' names are worthy of record; they were Mildred, Etheldreda, Æte, Wilnolde, and Hereswide.

That writing was a female accomplishment in the

[1] Lives of Saints. [2] Spelman.
[3] Hist. of the Church of Great Britain, 1674.

Saxon times, appears from a letter to St. Boniface from Leobgitha, a nun of St. Mildred's Monastery under Eadburga, sister of Domneva, the Abbess who succeeded Mildred. From Leobgitha's letter, it seems that it was customary for the nuns not only to read but to write Latin: she concludes her letter by saying, "Beneath are some verses which I have striven to compose according to the rules of poetic tradition, not with confident boldness offering them, but desiring to excite your superior mind, and asking your aid. *This art I learned from the institution of Eadburga,* who ceaselessly versifies the sacred law." The following is a translation of the lines in question by a modern author of talent:[1]—

> "Oh! may the Almighty, all-creating King,
> Who in his Father's kingdom shines in light
> Ineffable, to thee aye safety bring,
> And grant thee endless joys in glory bright."

Golden ink was used by the Anglo-Saxons, and sometimes silver ink. Their red ink was made of vermilion or cinnabar; sometimes manuscripts were written with purple ink, and capital letters with an ink composed of vermilion and gum. The black ink used by the Saxons in England during the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, preserved its original blackness much better than that used in succeeding ages.

Eadburga was abbess of St. Mildred's Minster from the death of that princess till the year 751; and to her many of the letters of Boniface are addressed. This venerable prelate, who was a native of Wessex, had been sent over as a missionary into Germany, to preach to the idolaters there; Eadburga watched over him with a solicitude truly maternal, and the excellent Boniface

[1] Miss Lawrence. See "Records of Women of England."

exhibits in his correspondence with the royal abbess every token of esteem and respect. In one of his letters he styles her "the most honourable maiden, and most beloved Lady Eadburga, distinguished for the wisdom of her monastic government."[1] In one of the earliest epistles, Boniface styles himself "an humble deacon," and solicits the lady-abbess to accept some cinnamon and frankincense, and a *silver pen*.[2] In the 28th of this collection of Boniface's letters, also addressed to Eadburga, the Bishop entreats her to write the Epistles of St. Peter *in letters of gold*, "to inspire carnal men with the greater respect to that apostle," whom he calls the patron of his mission.

St. Eadburga built a new church in honour of St. Peter and St. Paul, and as soon as it was completed, caused the body of St. Mildred to be translated into it.[3] It was, together with that of Eadburga, in 1055, translated to Canterbury, where they were deposited in St. Gregory's Church, by Archbishop Lanfranc.[4]

According to some writers, St. Mildred's Monastery

[1] Bonifacii Epist. [2] Lawrence's Hist. of Women.

[3] Butler, Brit. Sancta.

[4] A deed of King Edward the Confessor, confirming certain privileges to the Church of St. Augustine, at Canterbury, runs thus:—

"Wherefore, I, Edward, king, by the grace of the King of Kings, and prince of the Angles, after long banishment being returned to my kingdom, by the will of the only compassionating God, and sitting again on the throne of my fathers, do grant and decree that the church which King Ethelbert, at the advice of the blessed Augustine, founded in honour of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and enriched with gifts, in which the bodies of the King himself, and of all the Bishops of Canterbury, and of the Kings, might be placed, be free, with all its appendages and adjacencies; seeing that, indeed, in the same church the above-named King lies buried, and the virgin Mildreth, beloved of God, rests, begotten of his stock.

was entirely destroyed by the Danes in 978, but another account, given by Thorne, fixes its destruction in the year 1011, at the time of Sweyn's invasion.

Mildgitha, the sister of Mildred, retired to the Monastery of Eastry, not far from Canterbury, which Egbert had himself built to atone for his crimes.[1] At a subsequent period Eastry, the manor of which Egbert had vested in the Church, was given to Christ Church, Canterbury, by Ethelred the Unready, for the support of the monks' kitchen.[2] An ancient tradition affirms, that the altar-tomb, placed at the east end of the little chapel which belonged to Eastry Court, was the sepulchre in which the bones of the two murdered brothers of Queen Domneva were enshrined, and over which a light constantly hovered.

The three sisters, Mildred, Mildgitha, and Milburga, foundress of the Abbey of Wenlock, in Shropshire, were all canonized.

The body of King Merowald, which had been enclosed in a wall of the church of the Abbey of Wenlock, was found at the same time as that of his daughter Milburga.[3] Domneva, who is called "the virtuous mother of three virgin saints," had only one son by Merowald, who did not survive his infancy; so

I also, being sprung of the same king's stock, and, by God's help, possessed of his kingdom, do deliver up the isle of Thanet, which King Egbert granted, by hereditary right, to the venerable Queen Domneva (to the mother, to wit, of St. Mildreth), as much as a hind had gone over in its course, for the slaying of her two brothers, Ethelbred and Ethelbert, whom, by order of the same king, Thunur, hateful to God, struck down by an unjust death, whom forthwith celestial vengeance terribly followed by cutting him off."—Thorne's Chronicle.

[1] Butler's Lives.

[2] A.D. 979, Philipott.

[3] Philipps, Bromton, Drayton.

that his crown devolved on his younger brother Mercelyn, son of Penda, who likewise dying without issue male, the little kingdom of Herefordshire became reunited to the powerful territory of Mercia.

Queen Domneva survived her husband many years, and is frequently mentioned by our historians. Besides the Monastery of Minster, this Queen was foundress of a nunnery at Ebbsfleet, in the isle of Thanet;[1] but it was at Gloucester that she spent her remaining years after her widowhood.

[1] Speed, Tanner, Dugdale.

ETHELBURGA AND FRIDOGITHA,

QUEENS OF INA AND ETHELARD.

CONTENTS.

Invasion of Ivor and Ina—Conditions of the Conquerors—Marriage of Ethelburga to Ivor—His death, and her marriage to his successor, Ina—The arch of Taunton Castle—Ealdbryht Clito besieged by Ethelburga—The "Western Key of the Kingdom"—The Laws of Ina—Guala—The learned men of Ina's time—The Abbey of Glastonbury, and its rich endowments—Ethelburga's pious project—The splendid banquet and the contrast—Its effect on the King—Discourse of Ethelburga—The Crown resigned—Ethelard—Preparations for a pilgrimage to Rome—Departure of the King and Queen as pilgrims—Arrival in Rome—Religious acts—The Saxon school of Ina at Rome—Romescot—Return to England of the royal pair—Death of Ina—Ethelburga at Barking—Cuthberga, Abbess of Wimbourne—Canonisation of the Abbess-Queen—The three daughters of Ina—Fridogitha's liberality—Her piety and pilgrimage—Her death and canonization—St. Frideswide.

ETHELBURGA, and her brother Ethelard, the husband of Fridogitha, were descended from Cerdic, founder of the West Saxon monarchy. Their father was Ethelwald,

son of Cenwalch, King of Wessex, by Saxburga, sister of Penda.

Two adventurous chieftains from Armorica, Ivor and Ina, having entered into an alliance,[1] invaded the British coast with a fleet, and committed great devastations, especially in Wessex, then governed by Kentwin, son of Kinegils. Ivor, who was son of Alan, King of Bretagne, having won from Kentwin Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset, was offered the peaceable enjoyment of the conquered territories, provided he would allow Kentwin to retain possession of the remainder of Wessex, and would marry Ethelburga, that prince's cousin. At the time this proposal was made, both armies were drawn up in each other's sight in hostile array: arms were, however, laid aside on Ivor's accepting the terms. Ethelburga accordingly became the wife of the chief, and Ivor succeeded the famous Cadwallader, called "the Blessed," who, after a life of warfare, ended his career as a pilgrim to the holy shrine, having named his relative Ivor as his heir, who accordingly took possession of Wessex. On his death, in the year 690, both his kingdom and his widow were appropriated by Ina, his companion in arms.

The circumstance of Ethelburga being the wife of both these princes, and the similarity of their names, has caused some confusion in the not a little entangled web of this portion of history, so conflicting are the narratives of the British chroniclers.

As Ivor, however, disappears early, and Ina is a character of importance, it is sufficient to know that Ethelburga was his queen, of whom he appears to have been pas-

[1] Palgrave, Geoff. of Monmouth.

sionately fond. Nevertheless, a lady is mentioned as his mistress, for whose abode he constructed a building over an arch within his castle of Taunton, in Somersetshire,—a fortress founded by him for his own residence, in the year 700, and for the purpose of securing his conquests against the disaffected nobles of the surrounding district.[1] This arch the Queen, jealous of her rival, is said to have destroyed after her husband's death, together with part of the castle, to be revenged upon her. The statement, however, is apparently erroneous.[2]

The remains of the ancient castle of Taunton, founded by King Ina, are on the west side of the town, and are thus described:[3]—"The old building, being one hundred and ninety-five feet in front, had a circular tower at each end, of which one only is now remaining. The other, with the west end, has been long since destroyed, and a large house built in its room, that has been for many years a boarding-school for young ladies. The west end or wing is the shortest, being sixty-five feet in length, and was lately standing, as it was originally built, allowing for the injuries it had suffered from the cannon of its enemies, or rather from its greater enemy, time. The whole building had a flat roof, with parapet walls, and embrasures for guns; but part of the roof, within the memory of man, has been taken down, and the present erected in its stead. On viewing the back part of it, there could be lately discerned some breaches, made by cannon, in the old wall, which was

[1] Collinson.

[2] Sir Benjamin Hammett wrote to Dr. Toulmin, stating that it had recently been altered by himself into a room, after a lapse of twelve hundred years.

[3] Dr. Toulmin's History of Taunton.

judged, from its appearance, to be part of the castle built about the eleventh century."[1]

Of this edifice Ealdbryht Clito had obtained possession, and had secured himself there.[2] This Saxon chief was one of those pretenders who so frequently disturbed the tranquillity of the latter part of King Ina's reign. The Queen very materially assisted her husband in opposing them: she herself laid siege to Taunton, and after compelling Ealdbright to withdraw into Sussex, levelled the fortress with the ground. This act probably gave rise to the report of her having pulled down a part of the building from other motives. The castle was soon after rebuilt and fortified, and denominated the "Western Key of the Kingdom."[3]

The date of the destruction of Taunton by Ethelburga, was A.D. 721 or 722, according to the Saxon Chronicle. Ina afterwards directed his forces against the South Saxons, amongst whom Ealdbryht, after his defeat, was wandering in exile: he was finally slain by his antagonist;[4] when Ina had the satisfaction of witnessing the complete re-establishment of peace in his dominions.

To the period of these intestine divisions in Mercia may perhaps be referred the building of the ancient castle of Desborough, in Buckinghamshire, which, some think, was named after Ethelburga, who is occasionally called Desburga.[5]

The laws which Bede has transmitted to us of Ina, estify to his character, which appears worthy of ad-

[1] A Bishop of Winchester erected a new castle there about the ate of the Conquest.

[2] Saxon Chronicle. Collinson's Somerset.

[3] Dr. Toulmin.

[4] Camden.

miration: his zeal for religion, and desire to promote its interests, are a great feature in these laws. They were made at the instance of his father Kenred,[1] his bishops, Edda and Erkenwold, his Ealdormen, and other witas in council assembled. One of these enjoins the baptism of infants within a month after their birth, under severe penalties, which penalties are greatly increased if it died unbaptized; another releases a slave from his master's jurisdiction for ever, if he does servile work on a Sunday by his order; a third lays a fine on such as should strike in the church; a fourth orders the regular payment of tithes, with several others of a similar tendency. These laws of Ina are thought to have especially favoured the Britons, placing them in as advantageous a position as their conquerors.

It has been asserted that Ina himself set the example he desired to see followed, of intermarriages with the Saxons and British, by espousing Guala,[2] daughter of Cadwallader; but there is so much confusion of dates respecting this event, that it is difficult to come to a conclusion as to the facts. Milton, who names the marriage in his history, seems very doubtful about it; and historians are obliged to slur it over, evidently not being able to give the necessary details. It was not probable that during Ethelburga's lifetime, Ina should have made this alliance, as nothing is recounted of her divorce or resumption of lost dignity, circumstances very often occurring in these times; and the name of Ethelburga continually occurs throughout the long reign of Ina, both as a sharer of his warlike suc-

[1] See the Preamble to his Laws: "I, Ina, with the counsel of my father Cenred."

[2] Lambert's Archives; Winchester Chronicle; Rudborne.

cesses and his domestic peace. It seems more reasonable to suppose, that the similarity of names, and their repetition in the same family, may have led the chroniclers into error, than that injustice should have been done to the wife to whom Ina was so much attached.

The great respect shown by Ina to the distinguished scholar who illustrated his reign, St. Aldhelm, and also to the celebrated Winfreth, better known as Boniface, proves the worth of his own character, and the superiority of his mind.[1] Both these great men exercised a powerful and salutary influence on the acts of Ina, and both have left names capable of giving lustre to any reign.

One of the most memorable services to the Church, performed by Ina, was the rebuilding and endowing the magnificent old British Abbey of Glastonbury, which he did for the repose of the soul of a murdered kinsman, and which was a more Christian method of proving his piety than the signal revenge he thought himself bound to take on the murderers. Nothing could equal the splendour he lavished on this favourite building, and the riches he continued to shower upon it. It is recorded that he adorned the chapels in the most sumptuous style; "garnishing and plating them over with two thousand six hundred and forty pounds weight of silver, and erecting an altar which he ornamented with two hundred and sixty-four pounds weight of gold;" besides this the chalices, censers, candlesticks, and robes, embroidered and enriched with gems and carving of the most elaborate description, were innumerable.

Baldred, a sub-king of Wessex, almost equal to himself in power and riches, vied with Ina in gifts to this world-

[1] William of Malmesbury.

famous monastery; and the names of Ethelburga and Ethelhard appear in the charters of 725,—the latter styling himself "the Queen's brother."[1]

Ina and his Queen also granted donations to Old Sarum, which, from some records contained in the Bodleian and Cottonian Libraries, appears to have been immediately under the protection of the Saxon princes. The following record is very curious, as it probably informs us of the only churches there in those early times; it begins thus:[2] "I, Ina, king, for the salvation of my soul, grant unto the church of St. James, in Saresbyrig, the lands of Fokenham, for the use of the monks serving God in that church. Whoever shall presume to infringe this my munificence, let him, in the day of judgment, be placed on the left hand of Christ, and receive the sentence of damnation with the devil and his angels." Then follows the grant of Ethelburga, his consort, to the nunnery of St. Mary, in Sarum: "I, Ethelburga, wife of Ina, king, &c., for the salvation of my soul, grant to God, and the nuns serving God in the church of St. Mary, in Saresbyrig, the lands of Beddington, with their appendages, &c."

Ethelburga had, for a length of time, endeavoured to persuade her husband, then in the decline of life, to relinquish the concerns of the world, and receive the habit of a monk. The King at last, after a long and fortunate reign of thirty-seven years, laid aside his regal dignity, through her exhortations, aided by the effect produced on his mind by the ingenious device with which they were accompanied.

The following incident, important in its results, is

[1] Hearne's Glastonbury; Dugdale.
[2] Phillips's History of Old Sarum.

singularly characteristic of the time:—The royal pair one day paid a visit to one of their country residences, where a splendid banquet awaited their arrival, which was served with all the pomp and splendour attendant on regal luxury. Ethelburga resolved to convert this occasion to a useful moral lesson on the subject nearest to her heart. As soon as the King and Queen, with their cortège, had departed, the festive hall was, by her orders, scattered with filth and rubbish; while on the very bed, lately appropriated to their own repose, was placed a swinish litter. Scarcely had the travellers proceeded two miles on their road than Ethelburga made an excuse to return, and Ina, with much courtesy, assented to her request. His surprise was excessive on re-entering the hall, lately the scene of mirth and festivity, to perceive the disgusting change. In silent astonishment and displeasure he gazed upon the scene before him. When informed that it had been so directed by the Queen, he demanded from Ethelburga an explanation of this strange mystery. She smiled, and answered: "My lord and husband! this is not, indeed, the noisy hilarity of yesterday: here are no brilliant hangings, no flattery, and no parasites: here are no tables weighed down with silver vessels; no exquisite delicacies to delight the palate: all these are gone like the smoke and wind. Have they not already passed away into nothingness? And should not we feel alarmed who covet them so much, because we shall be as transient? Are not all such things, are not we ourselves, like a river, hurrying, heedless and headlong, to the dark ocean of illimitable time?—unhappy must we be if we let them absorb our minds! Think, I entreat you, how disgusting those things become of which we have been

so enamoured. See to what filthy objects we are attached. In these loathsome relics we may see what our pampered bodies will become. Ah! let us reflect, that the greater we have been, and the more powerful we are now, the more alarmed should be our solicitude; for the greater will be the punishment of our misconduct.[1]"

The reflections of Ethelburga, thus strangely prefaced, were by no means uncommon in early times, when strong contrasts were often brought to bear on worldly pleasure. The singular and impressive lesson was not thrown away on the intelligent mind of Ina, who immediately determined on what was then held as the highest act of piety, namely, to make a pilgrimage to Rome. This first step was to renounce the temporal dignity of his earthly kingdom, to prepare himself for the one immortal. He forthwith resigned his crown, by will, to his brother-in-law Ethelard, and then made every necessary preparation for the religious life on which he proposed to enter; assuming a plebeian dress, renouncing his rank, and living in a private and retired manner with his beloved Ethelburga, who joyfully aided him in carrying out his good resolutions. It is even said that during this period, Ina lived by the labour of his own hands, as was the custom of many of the religious of his times.[2]

Ethelburga accompanied her husband to Rome, assuming a masculine habit, probably for her protection on the journey, and, as is also asserted, retaining it on her

[1] William of Malmesbury, S. Turner. It is to be regretted that the place which was the scene of this remonstrance is not positively mentioned: one of Ina's palaces and a castle was at Somerton, in Somersetshire, thirteen miles distant from Wells.—Collinson.

[2] Hume, Tanner.

arrival in that city.[1] They resided there, not far distant from each other, in a poor and private manner, "unlike, indeed, the dignity to which they had been accustomed, but filled with mutual love, charity, and devotion."[2] They passed their time in constant exercises of religion and benevolence; among which may be mentioned the founding of the Saxon school by Ina at Rome, for the benefit of such of his countrymen who might seek an education in that city, with a church for their service, and to provide convenience for their interment. To support these foundations, and the English residents there, Ina is said to have imposed the tribute of a penny on every family in England, which was sent to the Papal See under the name of Rome scot, or Peter's pence.[3] The establishment of this tax is, however, more frequently attributed to Offa than to Ina.

Some authors state that Ina and his Queen died at Rome; others, that Ina, returning to England, shut himself up in a cloister, where he ended his days. According to Willis, the remains of this glorious monarch of the Angles repose in the middle of the body of the church of Wells (founded by himself), opposite to the north porch.

Queen Ethelburga is said to have entered into the Abbey of Barking after her return, her sister-in-law, Queen Cuthburga, Ina's sister, being abbess of the establishment; and when Cuthburga became Abbess of Wimbourne, in Dorsetshire, Ethelburga presided

[1] Bicknell. [2] Butler.

[3] Every family, possessed of goods to the value of twenty pence in Wessex, paid a yearly tax of a penny as "King's alms." This tax collected at Lammas, was paid to St. Peter and the Church of Rome hence it was at first called "Rome scot," and afterwards "Peter's pence."—Weever, Matthew of Westminster, Dugdale, &c.

over the congregation of Barking till her death, after which she received the honours of canonization.

Ethelard was named by Ina his successor, as he had no male heirs. Camden, however, mentions three daughters of Ina, of whom he relates a story similar to that of the three daughters of King Lear, and which is supposed by some of the editors of Shakespeare,[1] to have suggested to the immortal bard the subject of his play. Ina is said to have inquired of these princesses, on some occasion, not only whether they loved him then, but whether they would continue to do so during their lives, above all others, to which the two eldest swore earnestly that they would. But the youngest and wisest of them, unwilling to flatter her father, told him honestly, "That albeit she did love and reverence him, and so would whilst she lived, as much as nature and daughterly duty at the utmost could expect; yet she did think that one day it would come to pass, that she should affect another more fervently, meaning her husband, when she was married, who being made one flesh with her, as God by commandment had told, and nature had taught her, she was to cleave fast to, forsaking father and mother, kith and kin." This is all we hear of the daughters of Ina, whether by Ethelburga or Guala, and Camden gives it from an anonymous authority.

Ethelard became king in 729, trod in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor, and in all his undertakings was assisted by his Queen Fridogitha, who especially distinguished herself by the generosity she displayed in her donations to the Church, on which she bestowed the greater part of her own patrimony. The first year of their accession to power, both the King and Queen

[1] Johnson and Stevens.

liberally endowed the Abbey of Glastonbury. Fridogitha herself bestowed on it the manor of Brunantun (or Brompton-Ralph), containing within its limits five hides of land, which remained in the possession of the monks till after the Norman Conquest, when King William gave it to Sir William de Mohun.[1]

Among other acts of religious charity, Fridogitha prevailed on her husband to bestow the manor of Taunton on the church of Winchester; a truly regal gift, as Taunton, at that very time, was the chief seat of the Mercian sovereigns. Some writers assert Taunton to have been the gift of Emma, Queen of Ethelred the Unready; but as it is not named among the manors bestowed by that Queen, it is much more probable that it was given by Fridogitha. Ethelard gave, on his own part, seven manses or dwellings for peasants.[2] This donation was made rather more than three hundred years before the Conquest of the Normans in England, and in the interval, such a remarkable share of immunities, prerogatives, and privileges were appended to it, as are hardly to be found in the description of any other manor in the Norman survey.

'In 737, Fridogitha undertook a journey to Rome, accompanied by Forthere, Bishop of Sherborne, in Dorsetshire. This prelate is described as "a man of praiseworthy erudition, especially in the Holy Scriptures,"[3] and is numbered among our early writers. On the Queen's return to England, she abandoned all her earthly possessions, and devoted herself exclusively to

[1] Collinson's Somerset, iii. 505; Dugdale.
[2] Dugdale; Toulmin's History of Taunton.
[3] Matthew of Westminster.

the service of God. At her death, she was interred in the Cathedral of Winchester.

The daughter of Ethelard and Fridogitha, who emulated the pious example of her mother, became one of the saints of the Anglo-Saxon Church, under the name of St. Frideswide.

QUENDRIDA-PETRONILLA.

CONTENTS.

Melo-dramatic legend of Quendrida—King Offa screened by monkish writers—Unknown crime of Petronilla—Exposure in an open boat—Stranding of the beautiful stranger on the Welsh coast—Meeting of Offa and Quendrida—Fascination of the young King—Opposition of his parents—The royal marriage—Death of both Offa's parents—Offa's early deficiencies—Sudden change—Beornred's wars—His defeat—Offa's dyke—The Emperor Charlemagne—His letters and presents to Offa—Demand in marriage of Prince and Princess—Interruption of the friendship of the two Kings—Close of the French ports—Alcuin the Learned—Harmony re-established—The Princess Eadburga's marriage—Young Ethelbert, King of East Anglia—His proposal for the hand of the beautiful Etheldritha, youngest daughter of Offa—Excellent character of Ethelbert—His arrival in Mercia—Omens—Rich gifts and grand retinue of the bridegroom—Etheldritha, at her window, admires the beauty and grandeur of her lover—Quendrida's envy and hatred—Offa's welcome—The Queen's treacherous proposal—The chair of state—The canopy and the well—The murder accomplished—Despair of the bride—Her anathema—She leaves her father's court—Offa's remorse—Banishment of the guilty Queen—The spoils she took—Robbers—Her deserved fate—Offa builds cathedrals—The shrine of St. Ethelbert—Divine judgment on Offa's race.

THE history of Quendrida[1] has in it so much of melodrame, that, but for the repetition of her story by

[1] The name is variously spelt Drida, Cynedrida, and Cynethryth;

several chroniclers, great part of it would be considered fabulous. It is probable that the Monk of St. Alban's, in his account, has said more than the truth, in order to screen King Offa, the founder of his abbey, from the reproach of a foul murder which stained his reign, and has thrown all the odium of a fearful crime on the Queen; but other historians tell of her guilt,[1] and recount her strange adventures, therefore they cannot be rejected in a record of her life.

Tradition does not acknowledge Quendrida as an Anglo-Saxon,[2] but insists that she was of Frankish birth, and her name Petronilla; that for some crime not specified, she had been condemned by Charlemagne's officers of justice to be exposed in an open boat, and sent adrift at the mercy of winds and waves. The frail bark was borne onwards until it stranded on the Welsh coast, and there, in an evil hour, the beautiful stranger's half-lifeless body was found, and the fair-distressed conducted to the presence of the young Prince, whose destiny she was to become. She told her story artlessly, and with tears and entreaties for succour, related how she was the victim of conspiracy, being of the royal house of Charles the Great, whose mind had been poisoned against her; that she was innocent of all guilt, and had been most cruelly persecuted, the only reason for which treatment she traced to her rejection of the addresses of one who was hateful to her.

Her youth, her beauty, her eloquence, and her sorrows, immediately won the confidence of those who

but the *th*, in British, is pronounced like *d*, and the above spelling has been adopted as less difficult to the eye, in this, as in other cases.

[1] Roger of Wendover; Sax. Chron.; Vita Offæ II.

[2] Lappenberg, Bromton.

had saved her; and young Offa's heart became at once the prey of her bright eyes, more seducing in their tears. Deeply grateful for his commiseration, she is said to have exclaimed: "God, who frees the innocent from the snares of the wicked, has now happily placed me under the wings of your protection, has changed my misery to joy, and has made me feel more glad of my exile than I ever felt in the land that gave me birth."[1]

The fascinated Offa gave the rescued beauty in charge to his mother Marcellina, who, however, it seems, had even in the beginning, some doubts as to the truth of her story; but Quendrida, secure of her conquest, had no fears, and did not conceal her haughty disposition or her proud aspirings. All the remonstrances of both Offa's parents were vain, and the infatuated Prince made the dangerous waif thrown on his shores the partner of his fortunes, without hesitation. "The match was fatal" to both father and mother, who did not live a year after their son's marriage.

Of Offa himself strange marvels are related, as that he was lame, blind, and dumb from his birth, but recovered all his faculties suddenly, when the usurper Beornred persecuted his parents, and oppressed his country. Till this time he was called Winfrith, but the name of Offa was then bestowed on him, because of the similarity of the occurrence to that recorded of the Danish Offo, or Uffo, son of Wærmund, "King of Angeln."[2]

Offa (called the Second) was of the royal house of Wibba, and son of an Ealdorman, called Thingfrith; he

[1] Speed, Vita Offæ, Turner.
[2] Nennius, Alfred of Beverley, Saxon Chronicle.

appears to have been the nearest relative of King Eanwulf, if not his grandson, as in one of his charters he calls himself. In early life he had continually to contend with the turbulent chief Beornred, who had usurped the government of Mercia, but over whom he at length triumphed; his dominion was not, however, firmly established till Beornred's death, in 757.[1]

For a series of years he was occupied in repelling the incursions of the Welsh; and the famous dyke, known by his name, was formed by him, from the mouth of the Dee to the Wye, to keep out his troublesome neighbours. It is interesting, in many parts of that country, to trace remains of the deep boundary, which s still discernible.[2]

[1] William of Malmesbury.

[2] In the year 777, Oswestry was taken by Offa from the Britons, and the kingdom of Powis was reduced to the western side of the celebrated ditch still known by his name.

This ditch, called Clawdd Offa, extended from the river Wye, along the counties of Hereford and Radnor, in Montgomeryshire, from Pwll y Piod, an ale-house on the road between Bishop's Castle and Newtown; thence it passes northward, near Mellington Hall, near which is an encampment, called Caer-din, by Brompton Mill, where there is a mount; Lunor Park, near Montgomery, Forden-heath, Nantcribba, at the foot of an ancient fortress, Leighton-hall, and Buttington Church. Here it is lost for five miles; the channel of the Severn probably serving for that space as a continuation of the boundary. Just below the conflux of the Bele and the Severn, it appears again, and passes by the churches of Llandysilio and Llanymynech, to the edge of the vast precipitous limestone rock. From this place, it runs by Tref y Clawdd, over the horse-course on Cefn-y-bwch, above Oswestry, then above Sellatyn; whence it descends to the Ceiriog, and then to Glynn, where there is a large breach, supposed to be the place of interment of the English who fell in the battle of Crogen. It then goes by Chirk Castle, and below Cefn-y-wern, crosses the Dee and the Ruabon-road near Plas Madoc, forms part of the turnpike road to Wrexham, to Pentre-bychan

The ceaseless contentions of these times carry the historian in a perpetual circle of bloody wars and usurpations, until he no longer wonders that the poet-

where there is a mount; then by Plas Power to Adwy'r Clawdd, near Minera, by Brymbo; crosses the Cegidog river, and through a little valley, upon the south side of Bryniorkyn mountain, to Coed-talwrn, and Cae-dwn, a farm near Treyddin Chapel, in the parish of Mold (pointing towards the Clwydian hills), beyond which there can no farther traces be discovered. It seems probable that Offa imagined that the Clwydian hills, and the deep valley that lies at their base, would serve as a continuance of this prohibitory line: he had carried his arms over most parts of Flintshire, and vainly imagined that his labours would restrain the Cambrian inroads in one part, and his orders prevent any incursions beyond these natural limits, which he had decreed to be the boundaries of his new conquests. "It is observable," says Pennant, "that, in all parts, the ditch is on the Welsh side; and that there are numbers of small artificial mounts, the sites of small forts, along its course." These were garrisoned, and seem intended for the same purpose as the towers in the famous Chinese wall—to watch the motions of their neighbours, and to repel hostile incursions. The folly of this great work appeared on the death of Offa: the Welsh, with irresistible fury, despised his toils, and carried their ravages far and wide on the English marches. Superior force often repelled them. Sanguinary laws were made by the victorious Harold against any that should transgress the limits prescribed by Offa. The Welshman that was found in arms, on the Saxon side of the ditch, was to lose his right hand.

"There is a famous thing,
Called Offa's Dyke, that reacheth farre in length,
All kind of ware the Danes might thither bring;
It was free ground, and called the Britons' strength
Watt's Dyke, likewise, about the same was set,
Between which two the Danes and Britons met,
And traffic still, but passing bounds by sleight,
The one did take the other pris'ner streight."

The great dyke and fosse, called Watt's Dyke, is little known, notwithstanding it is equal in depth, though not in extent, to that of Offa, with which it has been frequently confounded. Of the forma-

chronicler Milton lost all patience, and exclaimed "Such bickerings to recount, met often in these our writers, what more worth is it than to chronicle the wars of kites and crows, flocking and fighting in the air?"

"Nothing," however, observes the learned Lappenburg, "would more raise the wars of Offa above this contemptuous mention of the great epic poet of Eng-

tion of this dyke, as to time or occasion, no authentic information can be found. It runs nearly in a direction with that of Offa, but at unequal distances, from five hundred yards to four miles. The space intervening between the two was considered as free ground, where the Britons, Danes, &c., might meet with safety for commercial purposes.

Watt's Dyke appears at Maesbury, and terminates at the Dee, below the Abbey of Basingwerk. The southern end of the line is lost in morassy grounds, but was probably continued to the river Severn. It extends its course from Maesbury to the Mile Oak; from thence, through a field called Maes-y-garreg Lwyd, between two remarkable pillars of unhewn stone; passes by the town, and from thence to Old Oswestry, and by Pentreclawdd to Gobowen, the site of a small fort called Bryn y Castell, in the parish of Whittington; runs by Prys Henlle and Belmont; crosses the Ceiriog, between Brynkinallt and Pont y Blew forge, and the Dee below Nant y Bela; from whence it passes through Wynn-stay Park, by another Pentreclawdd, to Erddig, where there was another strong fort on its course; from Erddig, it runs above Wrexham, near Melin Puleston, by Dolydd, Maesgwyn, Rhos-ddu, Croes-oneiras, &c.; goes over the Alun, and through the township of Llai, to Rhydin, in the county of Flint; above which is Caer Estyn, a British post; from hence it runs by Hope Church, along the side of Molesdale, which it quits towards the lower part, and turns to Mynydd Sychdyn, Monachlog, near Northop, by Northop Mills, Bryn-moel, Coed y Llys, Nant y Flint, Cefn y Coed, through the strand-fields, near Holywell, to its termination below the Abbey of Basingwerk. A dyke and rampart, similar in appearance, and not unlike in name, runs through the counties of Wilts and Somerset, called Wans Dyke, perhaps from Gwan, a perforation.*

* History of Oswestry.

land, than if it were ascertained how far all these chiefs were influenced by the mighty ruler of the Franks, Charles the Great. If any reliance can be placed on the monkish biographer, the Kings of Kent, previously to the invasion of that state by Offa, had applied to Charles for aid and protection. The menacing letters of the Emperor were unheeded by the Mercian, and in the course of years their mutual success united the lord of the Germanic insular realm with the chief of the Roman continent. Charles sent to Offa, or as he himself expresses it, "the most powerful ruler of the East to the most powerful ruler of the West," many costly presents, the catalogue of which has been preserved, though not that of the presents sent in return, which to us would have been of far greater interest."[1]

In a letter extant of Charlemagne[2] to Offa, mention is made of a Hunnic sword and belt and two silken mantles. The Emperor calls the King his "brother," but this is probably merely in courtesy, and cannot be admitted as an argument of his being related through his Queen Quendrida, as some have thought.

The friendship of the two courts was interrupted by a discord of some moment.

Geroaldus, Abbot of St. Wandrille or Fontenelle, had frequently been employed by Charlemagne in his missions to the court of Mercia. This prelate was sent thither to demand the hand of Offa's daughter for his son Charles. His negotiation was, however, unsuccessful; for though the very friendly intercourse between the two kings had warranted the request, Offa refused

[1] Dr. Lappenberg's History of England under the Anglo-Saxon Kings, translated by Benjamin Thorpe, F.S.A.

[2] Wilkins, Malmesbury, Leland.

to grant Eadburga to the French Prince, unless Bertha, daughter of Charlemagne, were bestowed on his own son and successor Egfrid, who is described as being "the only joy and pride of his parents." The desire of Offa to form a high alliance for his only son and heir was extremely natural, but Charlemagne was indignant at the presumption of the demand.

It is remarkable that this Princess Bertha, her father's especial favourite, was afterwards, or perhaps at that very time, secretly united to Angilbert, one of the most learned men of his time, who became Abbot of the powerful Monastery of St. Riquier, in Picardy. Bertha is described as being "the softened image" of her great father, in mind, voice, aspect, and bearing.[1]

The fathers, therefore, contended for the honour of their respective priceless treasures; but Charlemagne's anger seems to have been excited beyond bounds, and he immediately ordered the French ports to be closed against the Anglo-Saxon merchants. Thus all intercourse between the two nations was reciprocally interdicted. There had always been a great repugnance among the Saxon kings to intermarriage with foreigners, of which few instances occur prior to the time of Edward the Elder, whose sisters contracted splendid foreign alliances. Bertha, Emma, and Judith were among the few solitary instances of a prior date; and after Edward the Elder was Emma of Normandy, whose tie with Ethelred was the first step to the Norman Conquest.

The learned Saxon Alcuin, the friend and confidant of Charlemagne, was despatched to England as ambassador, to restore the broken amity of the two realms, which had not been destined to be of long duration.

[1] Angilbert's Carolus Magnus.

In a letter of Alcuin, quoted by Malmesbury, is the following passage: "I know not what is to become of us. Some dissention, which seems to have been fomented by diabolical skill, has arisen lately between King Charles and King Offa, so that all communication by sea is forbidden to the merchants on both sides. It is said, that I am about to be sent to England for the purpose of establishing peace."[1]

The object of Alcuin's mission was accomplished, and harmony was re-established between the rulers.

The hand of Eadburga, which had been refused to the French Prince, was given to Bertric, King of Kent, heir-apparent to the throne of East Anglia, in the event of the death of Ethelbert, a young and amiable prince who yet remained unmarried. The union of Bertric and Eadburga took place in 787, Aldric, the father of that king, being also associated in the government.[2]

Ethelbert had resolved to devote his whole life to the service of God, and not to enter the married state; but his courtiers overruled this resolution, and persuaded him to seek the alliance of some princess worthy of perpetuating his royal race. Ethelbert had heard of the beauty and virtues of Etheldritha, the youngest of the daughters of King Offa, and his friend and confident, Earl Oswald, strongly urged him to demand her hand. A council was held, at which the nobles of East Anglia were all present, together with Laonorine, the Queen Mother. Every person there assembled, except that royal lady, approved of the proposed marriage, and it was settled that it should take place.

On the part of the Mercians, Humbert, Archbishop of Litchfield, had suggested Ethelbert to Offa as a suitable

[1] Turner. [2] Sax. Chron. and Asser's Life of Alfred.

husband for his daughter, and was seconded by Unwona, Bishop of Leicester.[1] The excellent character of the Prince rendered the match in every respect desirable, and the Mercian King invited him to his court to celebrate his nuptials with the fair Etheldritha. When Ethelbert's proposal was thus accepted it was settled that the marriage should take place at the same time as that of her sister Elfleda with Ethelred, the Northumbrian King. The nuptial ceremony for both the royal couples was arranged to be performed at the ancient Mercian palace of Sutton Wallis, near Hereford, whither Ethelbert was to repair for the purpose.

On the day previous to that eventful one when

> "Our kindred all within the halle,
> The wedding feast arraye;
> When the song shall sound, and the dance goe rounde,
> And the musicke merrilie playe,"[2]

the young King of the East Angles departed on his journey towards Mercia, full of hope and expectation, attended by a retinue of his own nobility. In conformity with his usual custom prior to commencing his journey, he heard mass with habitual attention and devotion. Late in the evening Ethelbert arrived in the neighbourhood of Sutton,[3] where, instead of entering the town, he ordered his tents to be pitched, that he might pass the night in the open country. Some East Anglian nobles, however, were deputed to proceed to the palace of Offa and announce his arrival, with the cause of his coming, and at the same time were instructed to present

[1] This see was removed from Dorchester to Leicester in 737. It eventually merged into the present Lincoln bishopric.

[2] "The Greye Baron," from Dovaston's Legendary Ballads.

[3] Offa had another royal residence at Tamworth, where his successors. Kinwulf, Beornwulf, and Buthred, afterwards resided.

to the Mercian King some rich gifts prepared by Ethelbert, his future son-in-law. They were most graciously received, and Offa signified his approbation of the East Anglian's suit.

Ethelbert, after a night harassed with frightful dreams, which seemed to forbode some impending calamity, sent forward his chariots and pack-horses laden with rich baggage, well-stored chests, and provisions; and accompanied by an immense number of men on foot and horseback, followed himself, with a magnificent band of his knights, arranged in due order. The approach of this cavalcade was soon rumoured through the town, and at length reached the palace of King Offa. Amongst others who were attracted to behold the sight was Etheldritha, the maiden daughter of King Offa. From a window of the lofty palace of her father, she beheld the young King Ethelbert and his knights entering the court-yard. She marked with a woman's interest the splendid spectacle, and then hastened to her mother to speak to her of the manly beauty of Ethelbert, of the stately nobles, the valiant knights, and the wondrous splendour of his retinue. Queen Quendrida listened to her daughter's enthusiasm, and her malice and envy were alike excited by the narrative. She had opposed the marriage from the first, disliking Ethelbert for his religious devotion; for, being an unbeliever herself, Christian observances were hateful in her eyes. She had been deeply mortified that her daughters should have been unable to form foreign alliances, and had even persecuted the Archbishop of Litchfield and the other bishops, because, in the marriages she sought for her other daughters, they had opposed her policy, as ruinous to Mercia; and now nothing could exceed her vexation

when she found that she was likely to be foiled in her last expectation; meanwhile Offa, delighted to receive Ethelbert, his daughter's bridegroom, bestowed on him a paternal embrace, accompanied with the words, "Welcome, my son; welcome, my son-in-law, welcome! You shall henceforth be regarded as my favourite child!" Quendrida stood aloof, beholding the joy of the meeting with a scowling brow, and revolving in her mind how to make Ethelbert feel the effects of her resentment.

Unsuspicious of her designs, Offa afterwards repaired to his wife, to ascertain when it would be convenient to her that her daughter's marriage should be celebrated. It was then that Quendrida spoke as follows:—

"The subject is one which requires very grave consideration. You are well aware that the petty princes of the East Angles have long desired to obtain dominion over the Mercians. You have full knowledge of the hereditary enmities, and the mutual injuries inflicted upon each other by both these kingdoms; and now I am greatly deceived, if ambition rather than affection has not attracted Ethelbert to this court. Marriage is the pretext, friendship the cloak, which have served the purpose of the keen spy, who would judge for himself the weakness that accompanies your advanced years, and the best means of insuring your destruction. You should regard your guest, not as a lover, but as a hostile commander; for it is in the latter capacity he has appeared before you, accompanied by numbers of soldiers, large enough for an army—too large for the purposes of peace.

"Suppose he marries your daughter, and that such is the sole cause of his coming; then by right of that marriage he will regard himself as your heir, and entitled to

succeed you on the throne. As an impatient heir, he will daily wish for your death; and all that you now peacefully enjoy, he will constantly seek for, and as sedulously struggle to acquire. You prepare a rod of chastisement for yourself; you knot together the whip with which you will hereafter be beaten, if you give to one like this, pretensions to be your successor. Make him your son-in-law, your life is in peril, and your crown in danger; or if life be long spared to you, it must be passed amid the terrors of fear; you exchange the independence of a free king in your own dominions for the trembling timidity of an Eastern slave.

"Suppose, on the other hand, that you now reject his alliance, and that you allow him, justly offended with the treatment he has experienced, to withdraw from your kingdom, there can be no doubt that you expose yourself to as great a danger as that which you desire to escape. He now knows the roads of your kingdom—he requires no spy to tell him what parts of it are the most accessible for his troops—how it can be best assailed, or what are the points on which you will rely for your defence. He has seen and has noted your age and your infirmity; and all he has to do is to make as a pretext for hostilities, the affront to which you have subjected him, and on the instant he proclaims war, he begins the destruction of your kingdom, and deprives you of life.

"There is but one of two modes of escaping from the danger and perplexity entailed upon you by the coming of this guest; either he will in a short time cause your death, or you now must cause his—in my mind a just and fitting punishment for his presumption."

When Quendrida finished speaking, Offa sighed

deeply, and after considering for a few moments, answered her thus:—

"Your discourse has, in sooth, convinced me that I am reduced to a dangerous and pitiable plight; for I plainly see that on this side there is imminent peril, and on the other irretrievable infamy.[1] Far, far, however, be from me the detestable crime that you suggest; a crime which, if once committed, would bring eternal opprobrium upon me and my successors."

He quitted her presence, and soon after rejoined his royal guest with an appearance of tranquillity which covered the real anguish which preyed upon his mind. A magnificent banquet was served, with costly wine,[2] accompanied by music, singing, and dancing. The two Princes sat down together to the entertainment, and the day passed away in joy and merriment. But Quendrida, with "murder in her smile," meantime had prepared a tragic ending to the scene. Close by the couch which Ethelbert was to occupy at night, she caused a magnificent throne to be placed, over which was erected a royal canopy, the sides of it decorated with rich hangings. Beneath this chair of state there was a deep well. Such was the contrivance on which she had decided, and having seen that all was sure, she joined Offa and Ethelbert in the banqueting hall. There, entering into a lively conversation, she after a time inquired of the unsuspicious Ethelbert—"Will you not come, my son, and visit the maiden who is to be united to you in marriage? She anxiously awaits a visit from you in my chamber, and will, no doubt, hear with pleasure the

[1] Bromton.

[2] Wine was said to be "the drink of the elders and the wise," and only seen at the tables of the great.

words of love, when pronounced by her intended husband."

Ethelbert rose at once and attended Quendrida to the fatal spot, whence his attendants were at the same instant excluded. The Princess was not there, as her expectant lover had supposed, but Quendrida, turning suddenly round, said: "Seat yourself there, my son, until she arrives." The young King obeyed, and the moment he took his seat on the throne, the platform on which it was erected gave way beneath him, and in a mass fell with him and upon him into the gulph beneath,[1] where, by the aid of assassins concealed in the neighbouring apartments by the Queen, he was speedily suffocated; for Quendrida aided her confederates by flinging on the unfortunate Prince the pillows, bedding, hanging, and tapestry, lest the sound of his dying groans and shrieks should betray her crime. To complete the deed, the scarcely lifeless body was decapitated by the order of the relentless Quendrida.

That this horrible act was entirely perpetrated by the Queen without the knowledge of Offa, appears the more unlikely, since it is certain that he immediately after invaded East Anglia, and annexed it to his own dominions, which would seem to betray the motive of the deed.[2] So suddenly, indeed, did he march thither, that no measures could be taken for its defence, and it was added easily to his other conquests.

The innocent bride Etheldritha, becoming suddenly conscious of the horrible truth, in the midst of the general consternation which filled the palace had yet found time to convey warning of her parent's treachery

[1] The Monk of St. Albans, &c.

[2] Turner's Anglo-Saxons.

to the East Anglian nobles who had accompanied Ethelbert, so that they were able to make their escape, while the unfortunate Princess herself, in her consternation and despair, filled the air with lamentations, and even in the extremity of her anguish was led to curse the authors of her being, and prophetically to denounce the vengeance of Heaven which was about to punish them for their awful crime. To Quendrida she declared in words, as if inspired, that her only son Egfrid would not live three years longer, and that she should herself die in a few months, overcome with equal misery and despair to that she had caused.

Etheldritha instantly abandoned her father's court, and in the Monastery of Croyland, in Lincolnshire, received the habit of a nun, preferring rather "to be as a serf in the house of the Lord, than to dwell as a queen in the palace of sinners;" in that solitary retirement, at a distance from the vain pleasures of the world, she passed in sadness and contemplation the remainder of her days.

Offa, after the deed of murder had been perpetrated, took to his chamber for three days, which he passed without nourishment, sighing and weeping, his mind apparently occupied by the deepest grief. Whether from remorse or disgust, he avoided the sight of his guilty Queen, and commanded that Quendrida should be removed at once from court to one of the most remote and solitary places in Mercia, to be placed there in the closest confinement. He did not put her to death, but professed to desire that the prolongation of her life would afford her time for repentance. He suffered her, however, to carry to her prison an immense treasure, "the spoils of the oppressed." She had with

her the instruments of her doom; for these heaps of accumulated gold and silver induced robbers to attack the mansion in which she dwelt, for the sake of so splendid a booty; and the Queen, being seized by the marauders, who little heeded her dignity, was flung into a deep well, where, bruised and maimed like her ill-fated victim, she expired in torment. This Lady Macbeth of her time is said to have been called by the Saxon name of Leog, signifying "a queen to be feared." Offa witnessed the retribution of Heaven, on the author of what was perhaps a crime in which he had participated; he lived, moreover, to repent. Desirous of re-establishing his character in the estimation of the world, and to appease his remorse, or quiet the soul of the murdered prince, he paid great court to the clergy, and assumed the monkish devotion of his times. He even undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, to obtain absolution from the hands of the supreme Pontiff. He was ordered to erect a cathedral over the remains of Ethelbert; and on his return the Cathedral of Hereford[1] was built, whither, as soon as it was completed, he removed the mangled relics of the ill-starred prince, which had been dishonourably buried, at the time of the murder, on the bank of a small river near the palace. The edifice was then solemnly dedicated in the name of the royal martyr, who had been previously canonized by the Pope.

The shrine in which the ashes of St. Ethelbert repose is yet in existence, and an exact representation of the original may be seen in Strutt's Anglo-Saxon Antiquities. "It consists of a curious piece of enamelled

[1] Weever.

copper, lined with oak, which last is supposed to be part of the floor on which the murder of the saint was committed. The machine held by the two attendants, on which the dead body lies, appears to be the bier on which the corpse was carried on the shoulders of attendants to the place of sepulture. The writing on the tablet held by the attendant priest, is so obliterated as to render it impossible to be decyphered."

Offa, who is said to have bestowed a tenth of his goods on the Church, having richly endowed the Cathedral of Hereford, founded also the Abbey of St. Albans; and surely if the practice of saintly virtues claimed canonization, the honour was merited by Ethelbert, who, when living, was beloved and admired of all for his goodness and piety. One of the sayings attributed to him was the following: "That the greater men were, the more humbly they ought to bear themselves; for the Lord putteth proud and mighty men from their seats, and exalteth the humble and meek."[1] In the centre of the Abbey of St. Alban's may be seen a rude painting of the monarch, with an inscription underneath, setting forth that it was founded by Offa in 793.

The Abbey at Bath was likewise of Offa's foundation;[2]

[1] Holinshed.

[2] After Ethelbert's murder, Offa had removed to Bath, which city he had conquered after it had been more than two hundred years under the dominion of the West Saxons, who had rebuilt the Roman walls, employing in that task the ruins of temples, mausoleums, and triumphal arches, devastated in their conquest under Ceaulin and Cuthwin, A.D. 577. Roman sculptures had been inserted in these new walls for ornament. Thus the city was remodelled

he enriched the church at Westminster, and made also rich gifts to Canterbury, and other places far beyond his own dominions.

Retributive justice pursued all his family; his daughter Alfleda, married to Ethelred of Northumberland, was beheaded, by her husband's orders, before a year of her marriage was past. It is said that this pair were united at the very time of the murder of Ethelbert; and Strutt has published a curious picture from an ancient Saxon book in the Cottonian Library, representing the double marriage of the sisters, as if the nuptial ceremony with Ethelbert had actually taken place,—which is not unlikely, the better to secure the victim.

Ethelred of Northumberland was put to death by his subjects in the year of Offa's demise, and his son Egfrid, on whom his hopes were placed, died within a few months of his father: thus the line of Offa became extinct, and in the person of Egbert, the glorious Mercian kingdom became merged in that of Wessex.

Offa's grave was accidentally discovered in the churchyard of Hemel Hempstead. "In digging a vault, the sexton, when he had excavated the earth about four feet below the surface of the ground, found his spade strike against something solid, which, upon inspection, proved to be a large wrought stone, the lid of a coffin; and under it was found the coffin entire, which was afterwards taken up in perfect condition; but the bones contained therein, on being exposed to the air, crumbled to dust. On the lid of the coffin is an inscription,

according to the Saxon taste, and the Temple of Minerva converted into a Christian house of nuns, dedicated to St. Peter: in this foundation Offa placed a society of secular nuns.—Collinson.

partly effaced by time, but still sufficiently legible decidedly to prove that it contained the ashes of the celebrated Offa. The coffin is about six and a half feet long, and contains a niche or resting-place for the head, and also a groove on each side, for the arms, likewise for the legs; it is curiously carved, and altogether unique of the kind."[1]

[1] Monthly Magazine, vol. xxvi. Oct. 1st, 1808.

EADBURGA.—ELFLEDA.

CONTENTS.

Pride of Eadburga—Prince Egbert's banishment—He seeks shelter with Offa; is refused hospitality—Flies to the court of Charlemagne—The Queen's influence; her jealousy, and vindictive character—Infatuation of her husband—Her hatred of Worr—Her attempts to ruin him—Resistance of Bertric—The banquet—The poisoned cup—Death of the King and his friend—Flight of the Queen—She seeks the court of Charlemagne, is well received there at first—Her beauty and her gifts—Change of public estimation—Charlemagne's sarcastic offer—The incautious reply of the widow—The Emperor's contempt—His bestowal of a convent on her—Her conduct as Abbess—Her expulsion and degraded position—Her arrival at Pavia and destitution—Her death in misery—Her quaint epitaph—Detestation of her memory—Title of Queen not allowed by Anglo-Saxons—Egbert's succession—The contrast of the sisters—The Abbess of Croyland—Witlaf's sojourn and gifts; his attachment to Etheldritha—The Danes—Elfleda, daughter of Kenulf—Her son Wistan—Rejected offer of Berferta—Murder of Wistan.

EADBURGA, the daughter of Offa, who had married Bertric, King of Kent, is said to have "borne herself very highly, on account of her parentage."[1] Her pride

[1] Speed.

was ill-founded, for she inherited the worst qualities of her mother, without any of her father's merits, being disdainful, capricious, and of violent passions. She is accused of having incited her husband Bertric to banish Prince Egbert, the true heir to the crown, on pretence of his being engaged in a conspiracy against him: there are, however, writers who say that Egbert fled from the court of the West Saxons, because his father-in-law Bertric had attempted his life; his reason for the young prince's destruction being to remove a competitor for the throne, the title of Egbert, as son of Alchmond, though set aside in his favour, being superior to his own. The fugitive prince, whose story somewhat resembles that of Edwin of Northumberland, sought protection with Offa. But that monarch was not more kindly disposed towards him than his daughter and her husband, and Egbert was finally compelled to seek his safety with Charlemagne in the court of France: in that country it was that the royal exile acquired the accomplishments which enabled him, at a future period, to become so shining a character on the English throne.[1]

It is very probable that Eadburga used her influence with her infatuated husband, to prevent his doing justice to Prince Egbert, even if she had not been the original cause of his misfortunes; for every act of her life proves that her power was exerted to an evil end, and to offend her, or to stand in the way of her will or her interest was at once to create in her an implacable enemy. She exercised unlimited control over her husband, who opposed her in nothing, and allowed her absolute dominion in all the concerns of the kingdom.

[1] Hume.

When other plans failed to revenge herself on those she considered her enemies, she had a means to which she did not hesitate to have recourse, namely, poison; and it is said, that on more than one occasion she availed herself of her dangerous knowledge of the property of drugs, to get rid of persons obnoxious to her. Her success in these modes of vengeance was, however, destined, in the end, to cause her downfall, and "she fell into the pit which she had digged for another," as her mother Queen Quendrida had done before her.

Amongst the courtiers of Bertric was a young Ealdorman, named Worr, distinguished for worth of character and for accomplishments, to whom the King was extremely attached, and who had, in consequence, excited the jealous hatred of Eadburga. Having used every art to destroy her husband's confidence in his friend, she resolved to effect their separation by her customary method, in order to have no rival in the regard of Bertric. But she did not contemplate the event which occurred, and which at once deprived her of power and influence for ever.

At a repast, at which both Worr and the King were present, she presented the former with a cup, previously drugged by her own hand, of which he unsuspectingly drank, but at the same time, by an accident which she did not foresee, Bertric, taking the goblet from his friend, before she could prevent him, finished the remainder of the poison, and both, seized instantly with agony, expired before her eyes together.[1]

The King being dead, Eadburga, justly fearing the punishment she so well deserved, and knowing that she had incurred the hatred of the people, not only by

[1] Hume, Speed, Echard.

this, but by many other crimes, without delay hastened to fly from the palace, and eventually contrived to make her escape into France, taking with her all the riches and treasures she had been able to secure. Eadburga, thus laden with precious gifts, presented herself before the French throne, and there, at first, her beauty and liberality procured for her a courteous reception; but the taunts and mockery by which she was afterwards repulsed, abundantly prove how soon the false Queen lost the esteem of her royal entertainer. Charlemagne was reminded by her presence, that her hand had been refused by the proud Mercian sovereign, her father, to his favourite son Charles. As if in retaliation, the monarch is said to have offered Eadburga, who was now a widow by her own act, the choice of either himself or his son, in these words:—

"Eadburga, say, which do you choose for your husband; myself, or my son, who now stands beside me?" To which the Queen, with characteristic levity, returned: "If I am to have my choice, I select your son, because he is the younger of the two." On which the great King, smiling, answered: "If you had chosen me, you should have had my son; but since you have preferred him, *you shall have neither.*"

Charlemagne, after thus venting the spleen he yet felt on the score of his early disappointment, seemed to relax in his enmity, and gave to Eadburga a splendid monastery, where she, exchanging her lay habit for that of a nun, presided, unworthy as she was, as abbess, during a few years.[1] Her evil disposition, however, unable to reconcile itself to this privacy, led her to conduct herself so ill in that capacity, that she was driven from her

[1] Speed.

own establishment with infamy, and reduced to the attendance of one solitary female servant. Finally, Eadburga, daughter of the powerful Offa, who had once been "clothed in purple and fine linen," excluded from the society of all her former associates, was reduced to such a condition of miserable poverty and contempt, that, abandoned, shunned, and abhorred by all, she was forced to beg her daily bread in the streets of the city of Pavia, where she ended her days. Her case was publicly known, and many eye-witnesses attest these facts,[1] which are given on the authority of Alfred the Great to Asser.

The following epitaph was written for this Princess, and is here introduced more for its peculiar quaintness of expression,[2] than its appropriateness to one so burthened with crimes unalluded to therein :—

"I was, I am not; smiled, that since did weep;
Labour'd, that rest; I wak'd, that now must sleep;
I played, I play not; sung, that now am still;
Saw, that am blind; I would, that have no will.
I fed that, which feeds worms; I stood, I fell:
I bade God save you, that now bid farewell.
I felt, I feel not; followed, was pursued:
I war'd, have peace; I conquer'd, am subdued.
I moved, want motion; I was stiff, that bow
Below the earth; then something, nothing now.
I catch'd, am caught; I travel'd, here I lie;
Lived in the world, that to the world now die."

So universal was the detestation in which the crimes of Eadberga were held by the West Saxons, that upon the death of Bertric, previous to their electing a new king, they made a law that no female should reign in their country, and forbidding the wives of their future

[1] Speed. [2] Heywood's History of Women.

14,987

monarchs to assume the title of Queen, on pain of their husbands being deposed.[1] In consequence of this law, Redburga, wife of Egbert, was deprived of the regal honours,[2] and also Osburga, Ethelwulf's first wife. Through its infringement in favour of Judith, his second consort, who was solemnly crowned, Ethelwulf had nearly been deprived of his kingdom and authority. The law remained in force till the reign of Edgar, after which it fell into neglect and ceased to be observed, the wives of the Saxon Kings being always styled Queens or Reginæ, and sharing with them in the coronation solemnity, being anointed, crowned, and sitting in the chair of state by their side; the particulars of which honours, derived thenceforth through their royal partners, are yet extant.[3]

Egbert, the eldest son of Alchmond, was, on Bertric's death, recalled from France, and being the sole surviving descendant of the race of the mighty Odin, became King of Wessex, and finally chief of the Saxon Heptarchy.

On comparing the conduct of the two sisters, Etheldritha and Eadburga, we are almost tempted to believe that the difference in their parentage, which some authors have asserted, really did exist, and that the former was not the daughter of Quendrida.

During the space of forty years, the gentle and unfortunate recluse Etheldritha lived at Croyland, in the exercise of every virtue, for which she became so revered, that her name was, after death, included in the saintly calendar. Hospitality, not the least feminine

[1] Saxon Chronicle.

[2] The King's wife bore the title of *hlafdig*, or lady.—Sim. Dunelm

[3] Selden's Titles of Honour.

or least Christian virtue, was extended by her to the fugitive prince Witlaf,[1] when persecuted by King Egbert. Witlaf was sheltered by Etheldritha during a period of four months, in consequence of which circumstance he added to the privileges granted to the monastery by preceding kings, that of sanctuary within the five waters of Croyland. He also gave his purple coronation robe, "to be made into a cope for the use of the priest who ministered at the holy altar,"[2] and his golden veil, embroidered with the Fall of Troy, to be suspended against the walls at his anniversary or birthday; and besides these gifts, those of his gilt cup, embossed with figures of vine-dressers fighting with dragons, which he called his crucibolum, and the horn which he used at his table, for the elders of the monastery to drink out of at festivals, and to remember him in their prayers." This charter was dated in A.D. 833. The worthy Abbess, on her death, was interred at Croyland, on which occasion the grief of Witlaf was so poignant that he could hardly be withdrawn from her tomb. As a still further testimony of his affection and regard for her memory, he caused his Queen Celfred, and their son Wimond, at their death, to be interred by her side.[3] But, as if the spirit of Ethelbert was still raging for vengeance on Offa's race, in the year 870, Croyland Monastery was ravaged by the Danes, who broke open all the tombs in hopes of plunder. "There were on the right hand of St. Gutlac's tomb, the monuments of Cissa, Beccelin and Abbot Siward; on the left, the tombs of Egbert, the secretary of Gutlac, St. Tatwine, St. Etheldritha, Queen Celfreda, and Wimond."

[1] Sometimes spelt Withlaf and Wightlaf.
[2] Dugdale.
[3] Willis's Abbeys.

Being disappointed of their object, these barbarians laid the bodies on a heap, and setting fire to them, burnt the church and convent together, three days after their arrival.[1] Previously to this desecration, Beornwulf, who became King on his brother Witlaf's death, A.D. 838, when marching through Croyland, had despoiled the monastery of all that Witlaf and the Mercian Kings had bestowed upon it, having seized on all the money he could find there, with a vast number of jewels and other ornaments bestowed for decorations on the church.[2] At a later period, the King, however, made restitution to Croyland for this robbery.[3]

Wimond, who had formerly married Elfleda, daughter of Kenulf, was deprived of his rights as heir to Witlaf, by his uncle Beornwulf: nor was this all. Beornwulf and his son Berferth together, concerted to put to death Wistan, son of Wimond and Elfleda, an amiable and pious prince, who, led by his disposition to religion, left his affairs, on Witlaf's death, in the hands of his mother, who is esteemed a queen by our writers, and of his nobles. Berferth, knowing Enfleda's hand would convey a strong title to the sovereign power, sought her for his wife, though in reality his aunt by relationship.[4]

In conformity with this plan, Berferth sent his messengers to ask the Queen's hand in marriage. Elfleda, however, was utterly unconscious of the perfidious plot

[1] Dugdale, Willis, Ingulphus. [2] Roger of Wendover.

[3] He died 852, and during his reign, which lasted thirteen years, the name of his consort, Queen Sethreth, accompanied by the title Regina, was frequently appended to his in the royal charters granted to the church of Worcester; an additional proof that the law made in Wessex did not affect the other Queens of the Heptarchy.

[4] Capgrave.

of her pretended lover, and deferred sending any answer till she had consulted with her son and the nobles of the land.

Wistan was accordingly requested to give an opinion respecting the proposed match, when he gave the following answer:—

"My dearest mother, bear in mind that Berferth, who now seeks you as a wife, is both my cousin and your gossip; that he who received me at the sacred font of baptism, was as my father to a new generation unto life. Attend but to my counsels, and you shall be given to a husband that will never die; for those who marry themselves unto Christ, and accept Him as their bridegroom, shall receive as their dowry a glorious principality in the kingdom of heaven."

"Let it be as you have said, my son," replied the Queen; "I will never wed Berferth, nor any mortal man."

Wistan, assured by his mother of her determination to pass the remnant of her days in virtuous widowhood, revealed to the messengers of Berferth the canonical impediments to any marriage between that prince and the Queen.

Berferth, on receiving the answer to his matrimonial proposition, resolved on vengeance, to effect which occupied his entire thoughts. Under the pretence of peace and affection, he sent to invite the young Prince, his godson, to an interview, who, suspecting no injury, came, with his attendants, unarmed to the spot appointed, called, to this day, "Wistanstow." Thither Berferth also repaired with his followers, but they were all privately armed. At meeting, Berferth, taking the Prince a short distance from his friends, requested per-

mission to embrace him as his godson. "Approach, my son," said he, "and bestow upon me the kiss of peace." Wistan on this walked towards him, saying, "In the name of Holy Peace, that which is God himself, I kiss thee, so that in His name I may be kissed by thee." Berferth, who had at that moment no respect for his King, or regard for the laws of God, stealthily drew his sword, and striking the Prince on his head, while in the act of embracing him, he shattered the skull to pieces, while one of his followers ran the royal victim through the body with a sword. The rest of the young King's attendants were also put to death. This crime was perpetrated June 1st, 849; but the judgment of Heaven fell on Berferth for the deed, who, even on the spot, was seized, it is said, with a raging madness, so that he was never permitted by God either to marry the Queen, or mount to the throne which he desired.[1]

[1] Concerning St. Wistan, consult William of Malmesbury, book ii., ch. 13; and Harl. MS., 2253, *De Martyrio S. Wistani*. He is commemorated on June 1st.

QUENDRIDA II.

CONTENTS.

The granddaughter of Offa's Queen—Her great abilities and the high position she holds in the state—She is left guardian to her young brother Kenelm—Her sister Burganilda attached to the young King—His tutor Ascobert—The traitorous designs of Quendrida on the life of Kenelm—Ascobert agrees to aid her plans—Kenelm's dream—His uneasiness—He informs his nurse, who interprets it—Aware of his danger, he removes to a secure place—The Castle of Kenilworth chosen as his abode—The family of the Kenelms—The hunting-excursion to Clint Wood—The murder of the young Prince and concealment of his body in a pit—Quenburga mounts the throne—Is suspected by the people—Driven from the government, which is given to her uncle Kenulf—She assumes a religious habit, but retains her patrimony, the Abbey of Winchcomb—Touching legend of the revelation at Rome of the death of Kenelm—Discovery of the body—Canonization of the murdered Prince—Chapel built—Quendrida's scorn—The judgment of Heaven on her—Her death.

THE name of Quendrida is unfortunate in its repute; for Quendrida, the grand-daughter of the guilty Queen of Offa, inherited the bad qualities of the degraded Queen who disgraced the high lineage of Charlemagne, which she claimed.

Elfleda, daughter of Offa and Quendrida, after the death of Ethelred, King of Northumberland, had united herself to Kenulf of Mercia, fourth in descent from Wibba, the father of the warlike Penda. Kenulf had succeeded to young Egbert's short reign, and soon became distinguished by the virtue and piety of his conduct. By her marriage with Kenulf, Elfleda had three children, Quendrida, Burganilda, and Kenelm. Another daughter of Kenulf, named Brenna, became Queen of the Picts, but it does not appear whether she was also his daughter by Elfleda, or some former consort.

Even during the lifetime of Kenulf, the Princess Quendrida took her seat in the witenagemote of Mercia; so that it is probable that either some principality had devolved on her by inheritance through her mother, or by gift of her father, or else she was indebted for the honour of a place in the council to her father's partiality and her own talents. In the witenagemote held at London, in 811, Elfleda, her mother, and Quendrida, were both present, as appears from the signatures, among which is that of Quendrida, who styles herself "the King's daughter."[1]

From this fact of Quendrida having been honoured with a seat in the State councils of her father's reign, she must have early entered into, and become acquainted with power, and learned to love that dominion which she afterwards abused.

A monument of Kenulf's piety arose in a stately abbey, at Winchcomb, in Gloucestershire, the Mercian capital. Kenulf, at his death, was interred within its sacred walls. He had reigned twenty-four years, and died a natural death, a circumstance worthy of record in

[1] Palgrave.

those days, leaving his crown to his young son Kenelm.[1] This is recorded in the following quaint lines:—

"In the foure and twentithe yere of his kyngedom
Kenulfe went out of this worlde and to the joye of hevene com;
It was after that oure lord in his moder alyghte,
Eigte hondred yer and neygentene, by a countes rigte,
Seinte Kenelm, his yonge sone, in his sevende yere
Kyng was ymad after him, they he yong were."[1]

On his deathbed Kenulf had besought his eldest daughter Quendrida to take charge of the young Kenelm, his heir, then, as these lines assure us, only seven years of age.[2] In thus entrusting the infant King to Quendrida, Kenulf overlooked the more amiable Burganilda, his younger daughter, and made a false estimate of the character of his children. They were, indeed, very different in disposition; for though the aged King might esteem Quendrida, by her abilities, more competent to fulfil the duties of guardian to her brother, Burganilda is said to have loved the little Kenelm with a sister's affection, even to his life's end;[3] while the ambitious Princess Quendrida planned only how to get rid of the innocent child, who was an obstacle in her path to the sovereignty.[4] The heinous crime which the Mercian Princess apparently meditated from the first, is the more appalling from the exceedingly amiable character of the little King, her brother, which very early disposed him to acts of piety and virtue.[5]

Quendrida began her scheme by attempting to destroy Kenelm by poison, and for that purpose caused a strong draught to be prepared, which she offered to him with

[1] Vita S. Kenelmi, MS. Coll. Trin. Oxon. No. 57, Arch.
[2] Caxton, Holinshed, Palgrave, Butler, Speed; Brit. Sancta.
[3] Langhornii Chron. [4] Brit. Sancta. [5] Caxton.

her own hand, but it failed to take the effect she had anticipated, so that for this time she was foiled of her intention.

Ascobert, tutor or personal guardian of the young Kenelm, had long beheld Quendrida with a lover's admiration. This man the Princess corrupted from his duty, by the gift of a large sum of money, and a promise that she would favour his suit. As this would render Ascobert the sharer with Quendrida in the regal power, he undertook to put his young charge to death.[1]

About this period the monkish chroniclers inform us that the young King, having fallen asleep, dreamt a miraculous dream. He saw a tree stand by his bedside, and "the height thereof touched heaven, and it shined as bright as gold, and had fair branches full of blossoms and fruit. And on every branch of this tree were tapers of wax burning and lamps alight, which was a glorious sight to behold; and he thought that he climbed upon the tree, and Ascobert, his governor, stood beneath and hewed down this tree he stood on; and when this tree was fallen down, the holy young King was heavy and sorrowful, and he thought there came a fair bird which flew up to heaven with great joy."

Kenelm, on awaking, in much wonder, related this dream to his nurse Wolwelyn, who, on hearing it, was much grieved, and interpreted it to signify that his sister and the traitor Ascobert had falsely conspired his death; "for," said she, "he hath promised Quendrida to slay thee, and it signifieth that he smiteth down the tree that stood by thy bedside, and the bird that thou sawest fly up to heaven, signifieth thy soul, that angels shall bear up to heaven after thy martyrdom."[2]

[1] Brit. Sancta, Palgrave; Lingard. [2] Caxton's Golden Legend.

Whether any previous observations of the nurse had led her thus to interpret the dream of the young Prince, or whether a supernatural power of divine inspiration, as is asserted, guided her in this interpretation, her admonition was not thrown away on her young charge, who betook himself forthwith to a more secure place of abode. To this circumstance is to be ascribed the first foundation of the noble structure of Kenilworth, a word which literally means King Helme, or Kenelm, his "wearth" or "place of safety."[1] That the young monarch resided there, is plain from the remainder of the particulars of his sad history, which all connect themselves with the immediate neighbourhood. The residence of Kenelm[2] continued to be a royal palace till the reign of Henry III., who granted it to a member of the Kenelm family, "in whose family," says Weever, "it is thought to be continued at this day, in the person of Lord Clinton." He subjoins a curious article on the name of Kenelm, and asserts that all the persons in whose name the word Helme is compounded, of whom he gives a list, were originally of one family.

The youth and innocent life of Kenelm did not, however, influence the feelings of his treasonable guardian. The fatal catastrophe soon arrived. One day Ascobert, pretending to take him out on a hunting excursion, led him astray into a wood, named Clent,[3] where he fell an easy victim. After cutting off his head, the murderer drew the body into a great valley,

[1] Weever's Ancient Funeral Monuments.

[2] "King Helme, his home" (Sax.), was at one time united to the see of Hereford. Kenilworth, according to Dugdale, was an ancient demesne of the crown, and had in the Saxon times within its precincts a castle, which stood upon a place called Holme Hill.

[3] Caxton's Golden Legend; Langhornii Chron.

between two high hills, where he dug a deep pit, into which he threw the royal corpse, and laid the head upon it.[1] This deed accomplished, Ascobert returned to claim his promised reward from the partner of his guilt. It does not, however, appear that he received any share of the administration, though he became the accepted lover of the guilty Quendrida, who, overjoyed at her success, lost no time in assuming the regal dignity, and at the same time commanded that, upon pain of death, no man should speak of the unfortunate Kenelm. The Queen, thus arrived at the summit of her guilty ambition, was, nevertheless, watched by a Power higher than any on earth. Suspicion had naturally attached itself to her of being author of the late King's death, as the only person benefited by it, but as yet no one dared to accuse her. Still the Mercians disdained the government of a female as much as the West Saxons, and having had an instance of the deposal of a queen by that nation, in the excellent but inefficient Sexburga, wife of Cenwalch, were not slow in availing themselves of the precedent. They

[1] A MS. Psalter presented to Queen Mary, in 1553, by Baldwin Smith, a citizen of London, contains the representation of Kenelm, King of Mercia, hunting with his attendants. There is a difference of opinion among authors as to whether accident or design caused the death of the young King; and Malmesbury, who inclines to the former opinion, concisely informs us that his sister Quendrida, without any malicious intention, was the innocent occasion of his death, without, however, relating the particulars of the accident. More modern authors accuse Quendrida of the crime. According to the MS. Psalter, which contains the picture referred to, he was murdered August 16, A.D. 819, and the illuminator agreed with the opinion that Quendrida was author of the crime. A second engraving from the MS. Psalter represents the regicides in the act of throwing the dead body of the King into a pit.—Strutt.

accordingly deprived Quendrida of the authority she had usurped, and for which she had not hesitated to shed the innocent blood of her own brother, and placed upon the throne, in her stead, her uncle Ceolwulf.[1]

On this event Quendrida testified some signs of contrition, whether sincere or otherwise, by assuming a nun's habit. Although she had lost her crown, she still retained her patrimonial inheritance, the Abbey of Winchelcomb, bequeathed to her by her father, over which she now assumed the government. She could only have kept the supreme power a very short time, for the death of her father Kenulf, and accession of Kenelm, are fixed in the year 819; and Ceolwulf, who succeeded herself, and reigned *two years*, must also have begun to reign at the same date, for he was deposed in 821, by Beornwulf, a Mercian, whose only title to the crown was opulence and power. If, however, as Holinshed tells us, Ceolwulf did not mount the throne till 823, the length of Quendrida's reign would become extended by several years.

After her deposition, Quendrida is frequently mentioned in the English councils with the titles of "Abbess" and "Heiress of Kenulf." That she was a nun at the time of the Council of Cloveshoe, appears also from one of them. She was, however, compelled by King Beornwulf to compound with Wulfred, Archbishop of Canterbury, for the land which her father had wrested from him.[2]

The death of the ill-fated Kenelm has formed the favourite theme of many a monkish chronicler, and given birth to the following touching legend. His fate had been revealed at Rome by the appearance of a

[1] Lingard. [2] Ibid.

white dove, which alighted on the altar of St. Peter's, when the Pope was at mass, and let fall from its beak a scroll, on which were inscribed the following words in letters of gold:—"In Clent, in Cowbage, Kenelme, kyng born, lyeth under a thorne, his head off-shorne." Mass being over, the Pope showed the scroll to the people, but no one present, except an Englishman, could inform him of ts meaning. On which he sent an embassy to England, to Archbishop Wulfred and the clergy, desiring that the spot called Cowbage, in the wood of Clent, named in the scroll, should be searched throughout. The papal mandate was obeyed, and the result was the discovery of the body of the young King. It follows that many miracles are said to have attended the discovery of his holy relics. The legend goes on to tell how a white cow was instrumental in directing attention to the spot so much sought for. "This cow belonged to a poor widow, and being daily driven into Clent Wood, was used to find its way to the valley where Kenelm was buried, and though it remained without nourishment through the whole day, at night returned with the other animals, in better condition than they, and would yield more milk."[1] The name of Cowbage had been given to the valley in consequence, and the fact had become so well known, that the Archbishop and his friends found the place without difficulty.

The people of Mercia dared not remove the body, for fear of Quendrida's anger; but the Archbishop and his friends, less scrupulous, transferred the mangled remains of the murdered monarch with great solemnity to the Abbey of Winchcomb, where they were enshrined, and from that time treated as those of

[1] Caxton.

a saint; Kenelm being shortly after canonized by the supreme Pontiff.[1] *The record proceeds in the

[1] The Chapel of St. Kenelm is mentioned by Nash in his History of Worcester, as an ancient structure on the south-east side of Clent Hill, in the parish of Hales Owen, an insulated district belonging to Shropshire, although part of the chapel-yard is said to be in Staffordshire: the author remarks, "It is no easy matter to reconcile the tradition of the place (which fixes the spot where the murder was committed, and the body first interred at Cowback or Cowdale, within the parish of Clent), with the legendary account of it; for the legend affirms that a spring of water gushed out on the discovery of the royal infant's body. Now, in the field still called Cowback there is no spring of water, and yet not only long tradition has determined that for the spot where Kenelm was murdered, but the words above cited* point it out expressly to have been in Clent Cowback.† At the east end of St. Kenelm's Chapel is a fine and plentiful spring, and, till of late years, there was a well (now, indeed, filled up) handsomely coped with stone, and much resorted to, both before and since the Reformation, by the superstitious vulgar for the cure of sore eyes and other maladies. This well is mentioned in a court-roll of Romsley Manor, second of Edward IV., when the jury present "quod Johanna Haye occupat cenutærium et fontem St. Kenelmi, &c." Now, unless we suppose that the site of the present chapel was the ancient Cowback, and the limits of Clent since contracted into a narrower compass (for both the chapel and spring, together with part of the cemetery, are now within the manor of Romsley and parish of Hales Owen), we must either entirely reject the legend, supported as it is by the remains of the holy well and the chapel, which still bears the name of St. Kenelm's, and affords besides a very ancient specimen of rude Saxon sculpture over the south door, corresponding with that early age; or else we must adhere to the traditionary spot of his murder and interment, the present Cowback; and in that case it will be difficult to account for the holy well, and the erecting of the chapel at the distance of near a mile from the true place of interment."

* One version of the legend runs: "In Clent Cow-batche, Kenelme, king bearne, lyeth under a thorne, heaved and bereaved."

† Both Higden and Butler say that Cowdale Pasture, where the well was situated, was in the south part of Staffordshire, on the borders of Worcestershire.

true spirit of monkish credulity, "That when the saint's body was brought to the abbey, the bells sounded without the help of man, and rung of their own accord. Quendrida, the abbess, hearing the noise, then inquired 'What all this ringing meant?' whereupon she was informed that the body of her brother Kenelm was being brought into the abbey; to which she answered scornfully, 'That is as true as both mine eyen ben falle upon this boke.' And on this, behold-

"My opinion on this obscure point is, that Kenelm was murdered in the field now called Cowback, but the corpse was buried in or adjoining to the site of the present chapel, on the erecting of which, to the honour of this royal youth (who was soon after canonized for a saint), and the great resort of persons who came thither to make their offerings at his altar, the artful priest who officiated there, finding a spring of water in the chapel-yard, which might possibly have some medicinal virtue in it, most likely trumped up this tale, which in those days of ignorance and superstition easily met with credit, and thereby drew a still greater number of persons hither, in hopes to find a cure for their bodies as well as their souls.

"With regard to the fabric, no part of it except the south door appears older than Henry the Third's time, and I am rather inclined to think it of later date; but the arch and columns of the south door are undoubtedly part of the old Saxon chapel which was erected here soon after the discovery of King Kenelm's body.

"As this chapel was never privileged with the right of sepulture, no monuments or inscriptions occur, nor are there any arms or other ornaments in the windows. The tower is a very elegant piece of Gothic architecture, and rudely adorned with niches and pinnacles.

"On the outside of the chapel wall, fronting the south, is carved a rude figure of a child, with two fingers of the right hand lifted up in the ancient form of giving the benediction. Above the head of the figure is carved a crown, which projects several inches from the wall. No doubt the whole was meant for a representation of St. Kenelm.*

* Nash's Worcestershire, copied from Antiquities of Shropshire: see also in Nash's work, p. 107, and in Gentleman's Magazine, vol. lxxii. p. 1177, a picture of the Chapel of St. Kenelm.

ing with indignation a solemn procession of clergy and people pass by her window to honour his funeral, she took up her Psalter, and read, as it were, against him the imprecation of the 108th Psalm, in which, when she had proceeded as far as that verse, 'This is the work of them who defame me to the Lord, and who speak evil against my soul,' her eyes suddenly fell out of her head upon the very verse she was reading, and stained the book with her blood. Quendrida's primer was kept, for a testimony of this miracle, in the Abbey of Winchcomb, till the dissolution of that house, it still retaining the marks of her blood." Not long after the Abbess-Queen expired most wretchedly, and her body, unhonoured by funeral pomp, was cast forth, to use the words of the legend, "into a foul mire:" and who is there that reads the record of Quendrida's crimes and their deserved punishment, but must regard the death of the young Kenelm as enviable in comparison, and perceive that, even on this earth, there is a retributive justice awarded to the guilty!

OSBURGA AND ETHELSWYTHA,

QUEENS OF ETHELWULF AND BURHRED.

CONTENTS.

The mother of Alfred the Great—Earl Oslac, her father, cup-bearer to King Ethelwulf—Wars with the Danes—The King first intended for the Church—His choice of the cup-bearer's daughter—Her virtues and industry—Needlework of the Anglo-Saxon ladies—The five sons of Osburga—Her daughter Ethelswytha married to the King of Mercia—The title of Queen revived—The Danes overrun Mercia—Subdue Burhred, and force him to abandon his country—He dies at Rome—His Queen follows him, and dies on the road—Alfred's infancy—Prayer of Osburga—The story of the illuminated book of Saxon verse—The children's anxiety—Alfred's resolution and success—The pilgrimage to Rome of Ethelwulf, accompanied by his young son—Uncertainty respecting Osburga—Ethelwulf's return with Judith, the French princess—Death of Osburga.

No biography could be more interesting than that of the mother of the great Alfred, the most endeared monarch of the Anglo-Saxon race; a true hero, whose deeds are authenticated, and who is not a visionary object of the admiration of posterity, like the renowned champion, King Arthur, of romantic celebrity.

Unfortunately, too little of her to whom Alfred owed his existence is known. Osburga was the daughter of Earl Oslac, a descendant of Whitgar, the nephew of Cerdic; consequently her station, though inferior to that of the monarch whose wife she became, was dignified, and her birth equal. Her father Oslac filled the post of cup-bearer to King Ethelwulf, which was one only entrusted to a personage of great fidelity, and in whom the utmost confidence could be placed. This was important in an age when poison was so frequently resorted to by enemies, to rid themselves of those they dreaded or hated.

Ethelwulf had succeeded to the kingdom of Wessex after the death of his celebrated father Egbert, who had had to wage continual war with those redoubted invaders the Northmen, and, though often victorious, left his kingdom still threatened by them on every side. Ethelwulf's character was by no means warlike: he had been educated by a priest, Swithun or Swithin, of Winchester,[1] and had even, it is said, taken the post of sub-deacon of the same church when he was called to the throne. His life of seclusion probably rendered him, at the beginning of his reign, little ambitious, and he was content to choose as his wife, instead of some foreign princess of higher pretensions, the good and pious Osburga, the daughter of his cup-bearer, whom he had probably opportunities of knowing and esteeming.

As Osburga is never named by historians as remarkable for personal attractions, her merit, no doubt, recommended her to the notice of the sovereign; her "industry," as well as her piety, is, however, the theme of all the chroniclers;[2] and from the few anecdotes which

[1] William of Malmesbury. [2] Palgrave, Turner, Kemble.

have been handed down respecting her, there is reason to suppose that she, like many princesses who preceded her, was acquainted with literature, which, at that time had attained a very remarkable height of excellence, owing to the exertions of learned churchmen.[1] It would have been interesting to posterity, if the writers, who mention Queen Osburga's diligence, had described some of the elaborate work which occupied her leisure; such performances being considered so important, that a minute account of them was not looked upon as beneath the dignity of history, there have come down to us many charming and curious specimens of Saxon art in the form of needlework,[2] of which details are given; and from the talent in the family of Osburga, her own may be surmised. We know that some of her great-grandchildren, daughters of Edward the Elder, were particularly noted for their skill in this feminine accomplishment, and that her piety also was inherited in an eminent degree by her children.

Queen Osburga had five sons,[3] all of whom, except the first, who died in infancy, successively wore the English crown after their father's death. The youngest of these princes was born A.D. 849, at Wanating, or Wantage,[4] a royal manor-house of the Anglo-Saxon monarchs, where Osburga was at that time residing. This child, no other than he who was afterwards known as Alfred the Great, seems from his earliest infancy, to have awakened the tenderest interest in those around

[1] Asser calls Osburga "fœmina nobilis, ingenis, nobilio et genera."

[2] Standards were woven by Danish ladies of which strange marvels are related by Asser.

[3] Bayle, Raleigh.

[4] In Berkshire.

him, especially of his fond parents, whose favourite he is reported to have been. As soon as the Prince was old enough to receive the instructions of any preceptor, he was consigned by his mother to the care of St. Swithin,[1] then Bishop of Winchester.

Besides the five sons of Osburga, she had a daughter named Ethelswytha,[2] who was probably one of the eldest-born of her children: she was married to Burhred, King of Mercia, who had solicited the aid of her father against the refractory Britons, then under Roderick the Great, ravaging his kingdom. The powerful King Ethelwulf, joining his forces with those of Burhred, however, compelled the Britons to obedience; and the marriage of Ethelswytha took place at Chippenham, in Wiltshire, with great pomp and rejoicing, during the festival of Easter,—the union being a highly popular one.

It was on this occasion that both Ethelswytha and her mother Osburga received the title of Queen, and were allowed all the honours and dignities annexed to the rank, forfeited through the crimes of Eadburga, daughter of Offa, King of Mercia, and since then not accorded, by the Saxon law, to the wives of their

[1] Spelman.

[2] The names of Saxon women were generally significant of some circumstance in their own destiny, or the history of their family. Thus, Æthelswytha signified *very noble*; Selethrytha, *a good threatener*; Elfhilda, the *elf of battle*; Beage, the *bracelet*; Ethelfritha, *noble and powerful*; Adeleve, the *noble wife*; Eadburh, the *happy pledge*; Heaburge, *tall as a castle*; Eadfled, the *happy pregnancy*; Adelfleda, the *noble pregnancy*; Ælfgiva, the *elf-favour*; Eadgifa, the *happy gift*; Æthelgifa, the *noble gift*; Wynfreda, the *peace of man*; Æthelheld, the *noble war-goddess*; Ælfthyth, *threatening as an elf.**

* Turner.

sovereigns.[1] Ethelswytha afterwards subscribed her name, in conjunction with her husband, in the manner exemplified in the Old Register, at Worcester, as "Ethelswyth Regina." This Queen also affords

[1] Osburga herself was the second queen who had been denied the privileges of royalty in Wessex; neither enjoying the royal title, or the seat by her husband's side in the chair of state, which probably encouraged an idea of her birth being ignoble.* The first who suffered from the crimes of her predecessor by this diminution of the dignity usually accorded to the queenly state, was Redburga, wife of Egbert, and mother of Ethelwulf, who during the long period of thirty years, in which her husband governed Wessex, never was permitted to assume the title and state of the queen-consort. It would have been strange indeed if Ethelwulf had insisted on these grants in favour of his wife which the people had refused to his mother, who, for aught we know, might have been yet alive when Osburga became his queen. The character of Redburga, however, differed very much indeed from that of her pious and gentle daughter-in-law; she is, in fact, compared, by one of our old writers, to Jezebel, for inciting her husband Egbert, to whom the title Ahab is applied, to one of the most remarkable steps of his reign, by which she proved she possessed the influence over her husband, denied in the honours she ought to have received, though exerted in a bad cause.

At Redburga's suggestion, Egbert forbade the Welsh, on pain of death, to come beyond Offa's dyke, the boundary between England and Wales. This edict commanded that all the Britons, or Welsh, should, with their wives and children, depart out of their lands, cities, towns, and castles, in England, "to Wild Walshe above Offa ditch," and also to Cornwall, Scotland, and Ireland. After which edict (issued about A.D. 766) had been complied with, Egbert gave the land the name of England.

The above deed is attributed to a desire to gain over the territories of the Britons into their own possession, and the writer styles the Saxon King Egbert "cruel," and his Queen Redburga "his cruel and covetous wife."†

* Speed.

† Oliver Mathew's Abbreviation of divers true and auncient Brutaine Chronicles.

rather a singular instance of a Queen of England being permitted by law, in that day, as at present, to give a contract as a *femme sole*. In the Chartulerie of the Abbey of Abingdon, she alone bestows lands, by charter, to Cuthwulf, her servant.

Ethelswytha shared her husband's subordinate throne for twenty-two years; at the end of which time the still-encroaching Danes, removing from Lindsay to Repton-upon-Trent, took up their quarters there for the winter, and compelled Burhred to fly from his dominions, which they farmed out to Kilwulf, one of Burhred's household servants, contingent on his surrendering it to them at command. All Mercia was now overrun by the Danes, under their King Healfdene; their insolence, increased with their successes, and their ravages and cruelties were extreme. Burhred, unable further to contend with such foes, left his kingdom, and sought an asylum at Rome, where he died very shortly after his arrival, and was buried in the church of Santa Maria, belonging to the Saxon school.[1] Ethelswytha, who had not at first accompanied her husband, whom she hoped some fortunate revolution would eventually restore to his throne, finding that no chance of the ascendancy of his better fortune remained, determined to join him in his exile; and we learn from the Saxon Chronicle, that in the year 888 she set out on her pilgrimage for that purpose, accompanied by the ealderman Beeke, who carried with him the alms of King Alfred, and of the people of Wessex, to the city of Rome. It was not destined that Ethelswytha should reach the goal she sought, for she was taken ill and died on the way. She was interred either at Pavia or Ticino.[2] Such was the

[1] Saxon Chronicle. [2] Ingulph.

history of the only daughter of Ethelwulf and Osburga.

Osburga, after her daughter's marriage, which probably took place when she was extremely young, devoted herself to the care of her sons; and of her is told the charming anecdote, so often repeated, and so full of touching interest, of her exciting her youngest boy to learn.

It is recorded that Osburga was one day seated in the chamber with her children, holding in her hand an illuminated book of Saxon poetry.[1] (how precious would be the volume, could it be recovered!), which the brothers were eagerly looking over. Observing their admiration, and taking advantage of it, their mother observed, playfully, "Whichever of you shall first learn this book, shall have it as a gift." All were delighted at the idea, Alfred, the youngest, in particular, who, looking up into her eyes, gravely asked her if she were really in earnest. She assured him that she meant what she said, as she desired to see her sons learned men. Upon this the

[1] Writing books, as a monastic employment, was usual in the earliest times. Among British monks, David had a study, or writing-room, and began the Gospel of St. John, in golden letters, with his own hands. The Anglo-Saxon artists possessed eminent skill in the execution of their books, and the character which they used had the honour of giving rise to the modern small beautiful Roman letter.

In the statutes of the regular canons are two verses, specifying that they had simple girdles, tablets, combs, needles, thread, a style, paper or parchment, ink, and a pen-case. Du Cange mentions a singular kind of scribes, called Biodiatores, who wrote books and letters in the manner of embroiderers, so lightly representing the object that it almost escaped the sight.

The custom of carrying a pen behind the ear is ancient. In the Life of St. Odo is the following passage: "He saw a pen sticking above his ear, in the manner of a writer."—Fosbrooke's British Monachism.

child begged that the book might be entrusted to him to carry to his master, and he shortly after returned with it, able to recite all the poems it contained. Of course the beautiful prize was awarded by the gratified Osburga, who hailed this first indication of her favourite son's perseverance[1] with maternal delight!

Alfred required all a mother's care in his early life, as he was afflicted with a painful malady from an infant; and many were the vows offered up for his recovery at various shrines. Osburga's prayers, at a certain church in Cornwall, were supposed to have, at length, relieved him of his complaint to a great extent. As his health, however, was always delicate, it might have been the cause of his father resolving to make him the partner of his pilgrimage to Rome, though the child was then only five years of age, and the charge of him must have been a most anxious one. Osburga saw him depart, no doubt, with painful hope; and the result of her husband's journey, however happy for her son, showed that her presentiment of evil was but too well founded as regarded herself.

It is unexplained for what reason, at this time Osburga appears no longer to share the throne of Ethelwulf: whether they parted in fulfilment of some vow, common at this period, which might have had reference to the health of Alfred, or whether, as was equally common, she was repudiated, that her husband might be at liberty to marry the Princess Judith, of France, remains in uncertainty. Some writers have asserted that, though no longer acknowledged Queen, Osburga, after this marriage, resumed her duties, and superin-

[1] This anecdote is sometimes told of Judith, the step-mother of Alfred.

tended the education of her children,[1] which is not impossible, as the new Queen was only twelve years old, but is little probable.

Asser, the contemporary and friend of Alfred, wrote his biography, yet, strangely enough, he tells nothing of the remaining history of Osburga. That she died before her favourite son became king is certain, and it is most likely before the death of her husband; but this is left to conjecture, though some assert that it was to divert his grief for her loss that the pilgrimage to Rome of Ethelwulf was undertaken.[2]

Her tomb was shown at Coventry, where her memory was cherished, and she was canonized as a saint, according to the custom of the day. From this circumstance it may be thought that she retired into a convent, and died in the odour of sanctity.

[1] Lappenberg.

[2] Lelandi calls her St. Osburga, and her death has been stated as happening in 855.

JUDITH OF FRANCE,

SECOND QUEEN OF ETHELWULF.

CONTENTS.

Motives of Ethelwulf for his visits to the Court of Charles the Bald—Beauty of the Princess Judith—Attachment of Count Baldwin of Flanders—Ethelwulf's offer accepted—Splendid marriage of Judith to Ethelwulf—Royal presents—Ethelwulf takes his bride to England—They are ill received—Ealstan, Bishop of Sherburne, excites Ethelbald to rebellion—Offence given to the Church—Ethelwulf proclaims Judith Queen, in despite of opposition—Ethelwulf yields to his son to avoid bloodshed—Judith crowned—Prayers on the occasion—Alfred and his young mother-in-law study together in retirement—Ethelwulf's death—Ethelbald forcibly marries his widow—Displeasure of the people and the clergy—He becomes penitent—Separates from Judith—She sells her dower, and travels, on her return to her father's court, through Flanders—Meeting of Judith and Baldwin—Consequences of her stay—Anger of Charles the Bald—She is placed in a convent—Rescued by her brothers—Elopes with Baldwin—Enmity and final forgiveness of the French King—The children of Judith—Matilda, wife of William of Normandy—Ballad of the imaginary adventures of the "King's Daughter."

It has been already related that Ethelwulf made a pilgrimage to Rome, taking the capital of France on his

way, both as he went and as he returned, with his young son Alfred.

The beautiful Princess Judith might have attracted his visit on the second occasion, as policy had directed his first. His piety led him to all the celebrated shrines throughout the country, and there were few churches at which he did not offer up his vows. He passed a year in Rome, not only in pious exercises, but in viewing all the remains of the former glory of the Imperial City, even then filled with the ruins of its greatness.

Probably the acquaintance he then made with the habits of foreign nations, and the desire to see his own country improved in learning and civilization, might be his inducement to the step he afterwards took in uniting himself with foreign interests. If Osburga were still living it is difficult to reconcile his conduct with his former attachment to the mother of his children.

When, in 855, the English King arrived at the court of Charles the Bald, accompanied by his youngest son Alfred, then in his sixth year, the Princess Judith, his destined mother-in-law, was only between eleven and twelve years of age. No overtures were, however, at that period made respecting the French Princess, but on Ethelwulf's departure from the court of her father, the train of the royal pilgrims was attended, by his orders, with a truly regal retinue of Frenchmen to the borders of his realm.

Ethelwulf, having arrived at the Imperial City, had the satisfaction of presenting to the Pope the valuable gifts he brought thither for his acceptance. Alfred had, young as he was, already paid one visit to Rome, having been sent there by his father to be consecrated King by the Sovereign Pontiff. On that occasion Leo had

received the little English Prince as his own adopted son, and the gifts now offered by Ethelwulf to the Pope were intended as an acknowledgment of his personal gratitude for the Pope's generous behaviour towards his favourite child. These articles consisted of a crown of pure gold, weighing four pounds, two golden tassels called Bancas, a sword adorned with pure gold, two golden images, and four Saxon dishes of silver gilt; besides this there were several gorgeous dresses. These various presents are enumerated by Anastasius, a contemporary of Ethelwulf. Besides these offerings to the Pope, Ethelwulf made a perpetual grant of three hundred mancuses[1] or marks per annum to the Roman See, one-third of which sum was to be appropriated by the Pope, another to the support of the lamps of St. Peter, and the residue for the lamps of St. Paul's. A donation in gold was likewise presented to all the Roman clergy and nobles, and one in silver to the people.[2] The English King remained twelve months at Rome, during which he rebuilt the Saxon school which had been founded by his

[1] The value of a Saxon *mancus* or *mearc* was thirty pence, and it was equal to six shillings of their money, though, about A.D. 1194, it rose to the value of thirteen shillings. That the Saxons coined gold money is certain, and the mancus was their only piece of gold. They were accustomed to reckon by the pound, the shilling, and the mancus. The mancus was about the weight of our present half-crown.—Spelman, Account of Gold and Silver Coins. Asser does not say whether they were mancuses of gold or silver. Hoveden calls them mancuses of silver pennies.

[2] In the Camere of Raphael, in the Sistine chapel at the Vatican, among the pictures of princes who have been benefactors to the Holy See, is one bearing the inscription, "King Astulphus, under Pope Leo IV., made Britain tributary to the Blessed Peter." Leo reigned from 847 to 855, during which time Ethelwulf was King of England.

predecessor Ina, King of the West Saxons, and which, through the carelessness of some English residents, had the year before been destroyed by fire; and as a proof of the humane disposition of this King towards the English, it is deserving of mention here, that when he learnt it was customary for public penitents and exiles to be bound with iron, he obtained an order from the Pope that no Englishman should be put into bonds for penance.

Ethelwulf revisited the court of France in the month of July, 856, and it was then that he became a suitor for the hand of the beautiful Judith. Young, however, as this Princess was, she had already become an object of interest in the eyes of one who was by nature gifted with rare personal endowments, possessed of ambition, and capable of the highest undertakings. Baldwin of Flanders, or "the Forester," was as much distinguished by his courage as by his strength of arm, from which he was surnamed the Iron-Arm or Iron-Hand; he was of tall and noble stature, and his countenance beautiful. He had entered the field for the first time under the command of Charles the Bald, in the war that King had undertaken against the Saracens, who had invaded the borders of Guienne, and also against the Normans, who had made several inroads into the French kingdom. In these wars Baldwin obtained much distinction, and was accounted the most valiant warrior of the time. Having a situation near the King's person, he was often in the habit of seeing the Princess Judith,[1] whose notice he attracted by his assiduity and attention. So entirely did Baldwin win her respect and affection, that before the period of Ethelwulf's visit to France, we learn that he was betrothed to her in marriage. Neverthe-

[1] Marcus d'Assigny's Hist. of the Earls of Flanders.

less, Charles the Bald, for state reasons, hesitated not to break off this earlier contract in favour of the more splendid alliance with the King of England, setting at nought every obstacle which intervened on either side in a match more particularly unsuitable from the great disparity in age of the parties. Accordingly, Ethelwulf and Judith were betrothed and married[1] in the following October. The ceremony of the espousals took place in the palace of Verberie, when the nuptial benediction was bestowed by Hincmar, Bishop of Rheims, who at the same time placed upon the head of the little bride a diadem, and hailed her as a queen. An account of this interesting ceremony of Judith's marriage and coronation, when a double benediction was pronounced on her, first as a spouse and then as a queen, is yet extant. The magnificence of Judith's crown is even mentioned in a prayer on the occasion.

Presents worthy of the royal personages concerned in this marriage were mutually given, after which Ethelwulf determined on his return to England,[2] and took shipping with his youthful bride. During his stay at the French court, the news he had received from England, was of a nature to disturb even bridal festivities. An insurrection had been raised against him, by Ealstan, Bishop of Sherborne, and Eanwulf, Earl of Somerset, at the head of which his eldest son Ethelbald had placed himself.[3] Ealstan, to whom Ethelwulf had been indebted for his own prosperity, had become his enemy on finding his influence on the decline, and incited Ethelbald to rebellion, on the plea that his father, who lived the life of a monk, ought to pass the residue of his days in religious

[1] Sharon Turner. [2] Asser. [3] Milton, Holinshed, Turner.

seclusion, as he had begun them, and give up the government in his favour, as Ina and Cadwalla had done, who, like Ethelwulf, had gone on pilgrimages to Rome, but had first abdicated their crowns. Ethelbald had expected, when his brother Athelstan died, that his father would have made him King of Kent; but finding not only that this was not done, but that Alfred, his father's favourite, was consecrated King by the Pope, he feared Ethelwulf intended to prefer him as his successor on the throne. A natural thirst after power, and the dictates of an ill-disposed mind, combined to draw him over to the schemes of Ealstan; and the people were so much disaffected by the absence of their monarch, and the prospect of an infant heir to the throne, that these considerations, added to the unpopular nature of the new match entered into by Ethelwulf, prepared the way for a revolt. When, therefore, the newly married pair returned to their dominions, the rebels went so far as to prohibit the King's entrance into his realm; taking for their ostensible pretext, that Ethelwulf had not only dignified his new wife with the title of Queen, without the consent of the country, but had eaten at the same table with her, and placed her by his side in a chair of state, by which he had violated the law made by the West Saxons on the death of their King Bertric; by which they considered themselves absolved from their allegiance, and Athelstan and Ethelbald forbade him to enter England with his outlandish wife.[1] Everything appeared to threaten civil war,[2]—the

[1] Milton.

[2] To use the words of Dr. Lingard:—"It is some confirmation of the story told by Asser, that while, from the reign of Offa to the extinction of the Mercian monarchy, we have many undisputed charters, subscribed by the consorts of the Kings of

father, and son were opposed at the head of either party—when the friends of both interfered to prevent bloodshed, and it was agreed that Ethelbald should receive from his father the whole of the ancient kingdom of Wessex, which was the western division of his territories, while the King himself should govern the eastern portion, comprehending Kent, Essex, and Sussex:[1] the latter was the district the late King Athelstan had enjoyed, and by far the least considerable portion. Some of Ethelwulf's courtiers representing this to him, and wishing to persuade him not to sign the treaty with Ethelbald, the excellent monarch replied, that "he would not purchase the territories he had ceded to his son at the price of civil warfare;" and added prophetically, that "even could he so obtain them, Ethelbald would soon recover them through his death."[2] On one point, however, Ethelwulf was less placable—he insisted on the honours due to his Queen Judith, whom he continued to treat with the same respect and affection, notwithstanding the displeasure it occasioned in the kingdom.[3]

Mercia, with the title of Regina, there is not one in which any consort of a King of Wessex does the like during the same period. The most early instance in which that title is given to a wife of a King of Wessex, in any contemporary document, occurs, if I mistake not, in the reign of Edmund (anno 945), when Ethelgive, making her will, declares her intentions to her lord the King, and her lady the Queen, and bequeaths to her lady the Queen thirty mancuses of gold, and her land at Westwick. It has been supposed that queens were crowned, because in some MSS. the order for the coronation of a queen follows that for the coronation of a king; but this proves only that both orders were contained in the original from which the copy was made."—Hist. and Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church, by Lingard, vol. ii., p. 34.

[1] Hume. [2] Rapin. [3] Raleigh.

Amid the general dissatisfaction at the infringement of the West Saxon law, which pronounced it illegal for a Queen of England to wear the diadem of state, Ethelwulf convened the three estates of his kingdom, to sanction the ceremony of Judith's coronation, as well as to ratify the instrument by which he had bound himself and his people to pay over a tribute to the Holy See.

The ceremony of Judith's coronation[1] was performed

[1] The particular sort of crown worn by the early Queens of England has not been described. Alfred and his successors, to Edward the Confessor, wore the commonest and most ancient form of crown. Edred and Edmond Ironside had coronets like those of our earls, having fewer points, but those points raised higher and pearled at the top. In some coins of Harold, that King wears a diadem of pearls round a helmet; which was common with other West Saxon Kings, who sometimes wore it on their bare heads. The coins of Offa represent that monarch with a crown of pearls and other materials, similar to that used by Constantine the Great; and his successors, Berthulf, Burghred, and Kenwulf, wore the same kind of diadem. Aldulph, in the seventh century, wore the ordinary plain fillet or diadem, when King of East Anglia.—Selden's Titles of Honour.

The coins of Alfred represent his head encircled with a simple diadem, after the most common and ancient fashion; and there is not an instance among the Anglo-Saxons of any imperial crown till Edward the Confessor, who had a crown much like that of the Eastern Emperors.*

Spelman tells us, that in the arched room in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, where the ancient regalia of the kingdom are kept, upon a box, which is the cabinet to the most ancient crown, is an inscription, as follows: "Hæc est princi palior corona quâ coronabantur Reges Ælfredus, Edwardus, &c.," and the crown is of a very ancient work, with flowers, adorned with stones of somewhat a plain setting. This, by the inscription, appearing to have been the crown of Alfred and his successors, is to be supposed to have been made by his orders, and that when he was become universal King of the Heptarchy.

* Notes of Spelman.

with all possible solemnity: the form of the service used on this interesting occasion has been preserved by Du Chesne, and is worthy of notice, as supplying the only record extant of the phraseology used at the inauguration of a queen-consort.

The conclusion of the marriage ceremony constitutes the earlier portion of this form. After the ring has been given, with the exhortation, "Take this ring, the sign of fidelity and love, and the bond of marriage union, that no man may separate those whom God hath joined, who liveth and reigneth for ever," the Queen is blessed in the following words:—

"We invoke, thee, Holy Lord, Omnipotent Father, Eternal God, for this thine handmaiden, whom, in the divine dispensation of thy Providence, thou hast caused to grow up from her youthful blossoming to this joyful time. Give her richly of thy fear, that she may go on full of truth before thee and all men, from day to day, unto better things. May she receive, rejoicing with us, largely of thy heavenly grace, from the kingdom above; and thence, being guarded by the strength of thy mercy from all adversity, be deemed worthy to live for ever."

The rather long and elegant prayer offered at the anointing the head of the young and beautiful Queen, here followed, in which it was supplicated that she might possess "the simplicity and meekness of the dove;" after which the coronation took place in the following words:—

"May the Lord crown thee with glory and honour, and place upon thy head a crown of spiritual precious stones, that whatever may be typified by the brightness of gold, or the changeful splendour of gems, may ever

shine forth in thy life and conduct; which may He grant, to whom be honour and glory, world without end."

Then follow the blessings, thus:—

"Bless, O Lord, this thine handmaiden, thou who rulest the kingdoms of kings through all generations.

"Accept the offerings of her hands, and may she be replenished with the blessings of the fruits of the earth, of the heavens, of the dews, of the depths, from the heights of the ancient mountains, and from the eternal hills.

"May the blessing of Him who dwelt in the bush come upon her head. Grant to her showers from heaven, the fatness of the earth, abundance of corn and wine, that their people and their posterity may obey them, and this nation bring honour to her and to her children."

The service concludes with a short prayer, probably the same still said after the Communion, and truly beautiful and simple as it is, claims no small interest from the fact of having been in use among our ancestors no less than a thousand years ago.

Ethelwulf and Judith, after these ceremonies were over, retired into Kent, where they resided in a state of privacy better suited to the tastes of both, than the glare and splendour of public festivities.[1] Ethelwulf had rightly appreciated the character of Judith, when he bestowed on her the queenly honours which, next to his own affections, he deemed essential to her happiness, and to the maintenance of her dignity in the eyes of his people. However just that law which had emanated from the crimes of Eadburga, and was expressive of the national abhorrence of caprice and cruelty, he considered it unjust that the young, inno-

cent, and royally descended Judith, should be, for that reason, deprived of her deserved rights. The grave insult offered to both himself and his young bride on their arrival in England, must have been deeply felt both by the young Queen and her more mature consort. If, however, Ethelwulf had in the first instance offended his people, by conferring on a foreigner the forfeited distinctions of queen-consort, they were afterwards induced to acquiesce in his wishes by their love for himself, which his sweetness of disposition had obtained, so that in a short time, all objections ceasing, Judith appears to have enjoyed undisputed her royal prerogative of sitting in the chair of state by her husband's side.[1]

The anecdote before related in the Life of Queen Osburga, respecting the first learning of Alfred the Great, can scarcely be referable to Judith, as she was almost a child herself when the young Prince first came under her notice; and as he is spoken of as singularly precocious, his learning at five years old is not extraordinary; whereas, if he was twelve, as some assert, before he learnt to read, there is a difficulty in crediting the astonishing capacity he so early is said to have displayed. Ethelwulf, his father, had been instructed by the same personage to whom his son's education was entrusted; and as his health was delicate, like most sickly children, he most probably began learning very early. Judith had come from a court infinitely more refined than that of England, and being so nearly his own age, could enter into the precocious boy's studies, and no doubt assisted them; the ladies of her time and nation being well accomplished, although Alfred com-

[1] Selden's Titles of Honour.

plains of the ignorance of his countrymen in general, when he came to the crown. There exists, doubtless, some confusion of dates, which has caused the characteristic story told by Asser, to be attributed indifferently to the mother and step-mother of Alfred. It is certain, that Judith's stay in England was but short, even though she was twice Queen; but a few years at so early an age, and with children of great genius, can do wonders when the seed is once well sown.

Ethelwulf survived the partition of his dominions only two years, which period he passed in acts of justice and charity. The reign of Ethelwulf terminated A.D. 857, after he had sat twenty years on the throne, and his remains were interred in the Cathedral of St. Swithin, at Winchester.

No children remained by his marriage with Judith, and the dominions over which the King had ruled, were left by his will to his second son Ethelbert, and after his death, to Ethelred, his younger brother, in case of whose decease they were to devolve on Alfred. This was, in the end, the order in which they were inherited by the Princes, and finally, as will be seen in the Life of Alfred's Queen, were divided by him amongst his own family. The three younger sons of Ethelwulf had already shown themselves worthy of their parentage; but Ethelbald, the eldest, had not only rendered himself hated by the people for his arbitrary government and profligacy, but for the unfilial conduct he had displayed to his father. No sooner was Ethelwulf dead, than Ethelbald took advantage of the unprotected state of the widowed Queen, who, then little more than fourteen, was left exposed to the trials and dangers of foreign enmity. Her extreme youth, her great beauty, and

the disparity of age between her and the late King, may well excuse her, even if she herself consented to the proposal of Ethelbald to make her, immediately on his father's death, his queen.

Turner, in his History of the Anglo-Saxons, refers to the Saxon Chronicle and Bede, as authorities for supposing that by law a son might wed his father's widow, and a brother his sister-in-law; but in these cases there is ample proof that the act was not according to law, but in contradiction to it, from the open indignation expressed by the people, and especially the priests, when the violent and arbitrary Prince, in spite of all opposition, announced his will.

This step is rendered the more remarkable, from the fact that Ethelbald had been the most forward in opposition to the entrance of Judith into the country, after her nuptials with Ethelwulf. Liberty of choice was of course denied to Judith, and she probably saw the propriety of yielding with a good grace to necessity.[1]

The second nuptials of Judith were accordingly celebrated at Chester, greatly to the disgust of the nation.

If the marriage of Ethelwulf with the French Princess had given offence, that of his son with the widow was infinitely more disliked; and the clergy, taking part with the general community, protested altogether against what they represented as sinful in the extreme. The clamours rose loud and high, and at length Ethelbald was alarmed. His health was failing,—his temporary passion for his young step-mother had, perhaps, faded,—his religious scruples awoke, as often happens with princes too late, and he gave way to the remonstrances of Bishop Swithin, little regardless of the fair and youthful cause

[1] Turner, Holinshed, Burke, Caradoc, Milton.

of his people's anger. It caused him, apparently, no struggle to part from Judith,[1] who could have desired nothing better than to relinquish a dignity which had been forced upon her, perhaps in both instances.

It would appear that she was now obliged to retire from court, while Ethelbald passed the remainder of his days in penitence so deep, as to leave regret behind him when he died, only three years after.

French historians assert, that though her marriage with Ethelbald was dissolved at the instance of the Bishop of Winchester, no church censure was passed upon Judith; and the Pope's interference in her favour, when she had, by her brother's assistance, escaped from the convent in which she was afterwards placed, appears strong presumptive evidence that both her marriages had been of a compulsory character, and that this was well known to his Holiness, who regulated his conduct accordingly.[2]

Judith, free to return to her native country, was now permitted to sell the possession she had received as her dower, and, with considerable wealth, set forth on her journey.

She is said to have passed through Flanders, then under her father's rule, as her safest route to escape danger. A secret motive, however, may have been the hope of a renewal of her intercourse with Baldwin, who, still remembering her extraordinary beauty and his former attachment, and advertised of the great riches she brought with her, received her with great courtesy. In short, Baldwin testified so much regard and devotion, that when Judith expected to depart for France, she was so gently detained, that she was in no

[1] Rudborn. [2] Palgrave.

haste to quit that country. Some accounts, however, state, that even in this, Judith acted not from her own freewill, being forcibly detained by her handsome wooer whose excuse was, that even in her childhood he had been promised her hand,—a circumstance which inspired pity for a disappointment so great, and enlisted many on his side.

The French King, Charles, apprehensive, perhaps, of his daughter's partiality for Baldwin leading to some indiscretion, commanded her not to delay her journey; and to manifest his displeasure, either at her having lingered so long, or at her second marriage with Ethelbald, ordered her to be confined within the walls of the Convent of Senlis, but at the same time to be treated with all the respect due to a queen.[1] Under the guardianship of Bishop Erpuin, the young widow resided there in a style of regal splendour; the spot itself is described as "that pleasant and healthy abode, the royal nursery, where the Kings of France were accustomed to send their children: some Roman arches of their palace, enclosing a wild fragrant garden, were standing a few years ago."[2]

A learned writer has been severe on Judith,[3] calling her an "undutiful girl of ungovernable passions." Widows were peculiarly protected against violence, and it was a crown prerogative among the Franks that no female of the royal family could marry without her parent's consent; therefore Judith was to remain under *mund-byrd*, or wardship of Church and State, till she should either resign herself to widowhood or remarry. Charles appears to have designed the hand of Judith for the King of Navarre, for whom she entertained the strongest

[1] Palgrave. [2] Lingard. [3] Palgrave.

aversion, a sentiment which had increased in proportion to the progress of her regard for Baldwin. According to some, the alternative of entering the cloister was offered; but the peremptory mode of dealing with the young Queen points out the influence under which her two former marriages had taken place, and shows that it was expected she would yield implicit obedience to the will of her imperious father. After having been twice given away in marriages against her will, Judith, in the present instance, determined to evade one so displeasing to herself as that now proposed. Her brother Louis the Stutterer, who was in his father's secrets concerning Judith, fully appreciated the injustice with which she was treated, and encouraged her in her resolution of accepting no husband but Baldwin. Accordingly, at a time when Charles had left Louis to officiate as Regent of the kingdom during his own absence, a few months only after Judith had been sent to Senlis, Baldwin carried off the fair prize, with the connivance of her brother, and was supported on this occasion by the Germans also. Judith had, it appears, contrived to elude the vigilance of her guards, and in a disguise prepared for that purpose, escaped from the convent-wall and was soon, with her lover, beyond the reach of pursuit.

One account states that the lovers repaired together to the possessions of Lothaire, the brother of Judith. This prince, who is described as being "lame and unhealthy, but humble, affectionate, diligent, and pious," was of an excellent disposition, and resided, in his office of Abbot, at St. Germain l'Auxerrois. From this place Baldwin sent Judith, to whom he had been married without delay, to Flanders; and the troops which

Charles sent to recover his truant daughter, and who followed her route, were signally defeated.[1]

The perpetration of so daring an act as the abduction of the descendant of the mighty Charlemagne, a daughter of the royal house of France, spread great terror among the Flemings, amongst whom Baldwin held the office of grand-forester. Charles, himself, breathed nothing but revenge, threatening not only to make war on the Flemings, but utterly to destroy their whole nation. He first, however, ordered Baldwin to send his daughter home; but not being obeyed, he caused Anselm, Archbishop of Rheims, to excommunicate him for having forcibly carried off a widow.

This sentence of excommunication obliged the newly married pair to undertake a journey to Rome, where, on their arrival, they cast themselves at the feet of Nicholas the First, the Sovereign Pontiff. Count Baldwin then declared, that "he had used no blandishments, no deceits, or violence, against Judith, who had followed him of her own accord, without even her brother Louis reclaiming her." He prayed, therefore, that of his singular clemency, and for his love to the Christian people, he would grant him remission, and endeavour by any means to soothe the mind of the King, to mitigate his anger, and to find some way of peace with him. The suppliant prayer of the "Iron-handed" chief, added to the tears of his lovely young wife, had such an effect on the pious Pontiff,[2] who from the first had disapproved of the sentence of excommunication, that he not only interdicted that decree, but sent two bishops, Rhodoald Portuensis and John Ficodensis, to the French King, as ambassadors, to intercede from him-

[1] Mezerai. [2] Lingard, Mezerai.

self in Baldwin's favour.[1] The papal embassy proceeded to Soissons, where Charles was staying, and where the angry King assembled a council of Gallic bishops to receive them, it being the second time they had been convened respecting the subject of Baldwin's marriage. Finding he could not prevail against Iron-Hand in warfare, Charles had procured the condemnation of his new son-in-law in that pious assembly by the *Gregorian Law*.[2] Now, on their being a second time convened, various opinions arose, and much discussion followed the announcement of what had been done by the supreme Pontiff. As regarded the request of the Pope to Charles, the King thought something ought to be yielded to his prayer; and fearing lest the hitherto unsubdued nation of Flanders should join the Danes,[3] who were threatening invasion of France both by sea and land, "the King swallowed the indignity, and suffered himself to be at length prevailed upon. He requited a signal injury with an uncommon benefit; not only making peace with Flanders, but receiving Baldwin into his friendship, he ratified and approved the marriage of his daughter."[4]

Judith and her husband were, on this occasion, admitted to a private interview with the King, who gave orders that their nuptials should be celebrated by costly feasts and public expressions of joy, A.D. 863,[5] though he would not assist in person at the ceremony, which was performed at Auxerre, whither the French nobles were convened for that purpose. Hincmar,

[1] Annales Flandriæ.

[2] Although they are said to have favoured Baldwin in their hearts.

[3] Turner. [4] Annales Flandriæ.

[5] Hist. of the Earls of Flanders.

Archbishop of Rheims, who had married Judith to Ethelwulf while yet a child, refusing to unite her to Baldwin on the present occasion, the ceremony was performed by the Bishop of Noviomagus.[1] After this the pair retired into Flanders, where they resided with much magnificence; Charles having conferred the government of that country on Baldwin, as the dowry of his daughter, together with the title of Earl, by which dignity Baldwin obtained a position among the Peers of France.

The lands appropriated to Baldwin consisted of all that tract which lies between the rivers Scheld and Somme, and the ocean, and were bestowed on the understanding that the Earl should employ all his forces to defend that territory from the Normans. The success of the Earl did not in this equal his courage for the barbarous Normans overran all Flanders, and laid it waste with fire and sword, taking possession of many towns, one of which was Ghent, which they plundered. Baldwin had, hoping to arrest their depredations, built the city of Bruges, A.D. 856, and fortified it with a strong castle, called the Burgh; and the lands that had been laid waste, were, by his orders, recultivated. In the centre of Ghent, also, we may yet see the dark, battered towers of the castellated palace of Baudouin, "Bras de Fer." The second Baudouin added the fortifications which defended the birthplace of Charles Quint.[2]

[1] Lingard.

[2] Ibid. "Besides these, many good works are recorded of the Iron-Handed Forester, such as monasteries endowed and charities judiciously and generously bestowed. If not of regal or even noble birth, the nobility of good actions has conferred celebrity on his name, so that it matters little how historians differ as to his genealogical descent. Those, however, who are satisfied to leave

It is not recorded whether Judith appeared at the French court after her reconciliation with King Charles. Three years after her marriage, her father and mother were publicly crowned at Soissons, A.D. 866: but the heart of Charles was estranged from his consort by another, and had he not feared the consequences, he would have repudiated her. Queen Ermentrude was not long an obstacle in his way; she died October 6th, 869, to the joy of her husband, who, far from regretting her loss, regarded the event as a benefit, and married her rival Richelda in the following year. Ermentrude died at the Abbey of St. Denis, in the church of which her remains were deposited. Many vicissitudes had been experienced by her children during her own life. One of her sons, Louis, was surnamed "the Stammerer," from a natural defect; another, Lothaire, called Le Boiteux, or "the Cripple," had preceded her to the tomb, in 866; a third, Carloman, died, also, in 866, after having had his eyes put out by the orders of his unfeeling father.[1] Seldom, indeed, was any father so despotic as Charles the Bald. Carloman had been devoted to a religious life against his own will, and to escape taking the vows, fled the country, for which offence he was condemned by a synod of national bishops to *lose his eyes*. He appealed to Adrian II., the reigning Pontiff, who took his part in so warm a manner that Charles resented it as an insult. The

the traditions of the Flemings unnoticed, place this heroic chief, in their genealogies, as the son of Count Odoaire, son of Count Ingelrain, both hereditary Counts Foresters, whose epitaphs were to be seen, in the last century, cut on stone, at Bruges.*

[1] Anecdotes des Reines et Régentes de France.

* Palgrave.

French clergy supported Charles, and a conference terminated the dispute; the Pope abandoning Carloman to his fate, the unfortunate Prince underwent the savage punishment to which he had been condemned.

The unfortunate Carloman was afterwards harboured by his uncle, Louis le Germanique, and maintained in a monastery out of charity. Charles, King of Aquitaine, was a fourth brother of Judith, who had likewise several sisters, all of whom became abbesses. Of the four sons of Charles the Bald by Richelda, Pepin, Drogo, Louis, and Charles, all died young, and the last when his parents were in great distress.[1]

The domestic tyranny Judith had personally experienced could have left her little to seek of happiness in the French court, and from the nature of her union with Baldwin, it may be presumed that their marriage was a happy one. They were blessed with several children, and though Charles, their first-born, died in infancy, the second boy, named after his father (thought by some to have had the peculiarity of baldness which distinguished his grandfather the French King from his surname), lived to inherit the earldom as Baldwin "the Bald." When her first child died, "Judith sorrowed much, attributing it to the want of mother's milk, and she determined herself to nourish the next babe, named after its father. The Lieutenant Bailli, of Tournay, expatiates upon the maternal conduct of 'Madame Judith,' a reproach to the matronly luxury and self-indulgence of his times. Baldwin II's manly vigour did credit to his mother's tenderness: he afterwards had abundant locks of hair, though he called himself 'le

[1] Palgrave.

Chauve,' in honour of his grandfather."[1] Rudolf, his brother, became afterwards Count and Abbot of Cambray, which city, and the country surrounding, had been purchased by his father.[2] Gunadilde, daughter of Baldwin and Judith, married Wifred, Earl of Barcelona.

Earl Baldwin I. is said to have given good laws to the people of Flanders, over whom he ruled sixteen years, and at his death was interred in the convent church of St. Bertin, at St. Omer's.[3]

Baldwin "the Bald," who succeeded his father, espoused Elstrude, a Saxon princess, daughter of Alfred the Great, and grand-daughter of Ethelwulf, the first husband of Judith.[4] Thus was, no doubt, revived the tie of affection and interest between the Princess of France and her pupil and companion in literature, King Alfred. Nor is it the least interesting point in the history of Judith and her family, that from the son of this marriage was derived, in the female line, our Norman race of kings; Matilda, Queen of William the Conqueror, being the immediate descendant of Arnold the Great, son of Baldwin the Bald and Elstrude of England. It is singular that though there were no children from the marriage of Judith and Ethelwulf, their descendants, in two distinct lines, should have so long ruled the realm of England.

The adventures of Judith, arranged according to the poet's fancy, are the subject of a curious poem, contained in a Collection of Ancient Ballads:[5] it is entitled "An

[1] Palgrave, Hist. of Normandy and England.

[2] Hist. of the Earls of Flanders; Ducarel's Norman Antiquities.

[3] Hist. of the Earls of Flanders. [4] Ducarel.

[5] The editor gives it from an ancient folio MS., collated with another in black letter, in the Pepys Collection.

excellent Ballad of a Prince of England's courtship to the King of France's Daughter, &c." (to the tune of 'Crimson Velvet'), and may interest the lover of antique traditions.

The song begins by stating that, in the days of old, the Queen of France had a daughter who was "lovely faire," and that a Prince of England, exiled and outcast, yet noted for his merit, coming to her father's court, an attachment between him and the Princess ensued. The King disapproving the match, they agreed to escape together from thraldom.

"The ladye soone prepared
Her jewells and her treasure:
Having no regard
For state and royal bloode
In homely poore array,
She went from court away,
To meet her joye and heart's delight,

"Who in a forest great
Had taken up his seat,
To wayt her coming in the night.
But lo! what sudden danger
To this princely stranger:
Chanced, as he sate alone!
By outlawes he was robbed,
And with ponyards stabbed,
Uttering many a dying grone."

The Princess, "in her strange attire," escapes without recognition to the forest, only to find her royal lover weltering in his blood on the ground. She gives vent to the most passionate exclamations of grief, and endeavours, "with her golden haires," to staunch the wounds; but her efforts and prayers are alike useless.

"All in vaine she sued,
All in vaine she wooed;
The prince's life was fled and gone."

Bewailing her own destiny, and her lover's hard fate, she passes the night in mourning over his remains, and resolves not to return to the court of her father.

"To my father's court
I return will never,
But in lowly sort
I will a servant bee."

Whilst she is thus lamenting, a forester, all in green, coming by, inquires the cause of her affliction. She tells him her *brother* lies slain by her side, and requests him to direct her to some situation where she may obtain servile employment, in these words:—

"Where may I remaine,
Gentle for'ster shew me,
Till I can obtaine
A service in my neede?
Pains I will not spare.
This kinde favour doe mee;
It will ease my care;
Heaven shall be thy meede.

"The for'ster, all amazed,
On her beautye gazed
Till his heart was set on fire.
'If, faire maid,' quoth hee,
'You will goe with mee,
You shall have your heart's desire.'
He brought her to his mother,
And above all other
He sett forth this maiden's praise.
Long was his heart inflamed,
At length her love he gained,
And fortune crowned his future dayes.

" Thus unknowne he wedde
With a king s faire daughter :
Children seven they had,
Ere she told her birth ;
Which when once he knew,
Humbly he besought her,
He to the world might shew
Her rank and princely worth.
He cloathed his children then
(Not like other men)
In partye colours strange to see.
The right side cloth of gold,
The left side to behold
Of woollen cloth still framed hee.
Men thereatt did wonder;
Golden fame did thunder
This strange deed in every place.
The King of France came hither,
It being pleasant weather,
In those woods the hart to chase.

" The children then they bring—
So their mother willed it—
Where the royall king
Must of force come bye.
Their mother's riche array
Was of crimson velvet ;
Their father's all of gray,
Seemelye to the eye.

" Then this famous king,
Noting everything,
Asked how he durst be so bold
To let his wife so weare,
And decke his children there
In costly robes of pearle and gold ?
The forrester replying,
And the cause descrying,
To the king these words did say.
'Well may they by their mother
Weare rich clothes with other,
Being by birth a princesse gay.'

"The king, aroused thus,
More heedfullye beheld them,
Till a crimson blush,
His remembrance crost.
'The more I fix my mind
On thy wife and children,
The more methinks I find
The daughter which I lost.
Falling on her knee,
'I am that child,' quoth she;
'Pardon me, my sovereign liege.'
The King perceiving this,
His daughter deare did kiss,
While joyfull teares did stopp his speeche.
With his traine he tourned,
And with them sojourned.
Strait he dubbed her husband knight;
Then made him Erle of Flanders,
And chiefe of his commanders:
Thus were their sorrowes put to flight."

ELSWITHA, WIFE OF ALFRED THE GREAT, AND ETHELFLEDA, "LADY OF MERCIA."

CONTENTS.

Romantic legend of the meeting of Alfred the Great and Elswitha—Albanac's family—The nocturnal visit—The daughters—The father's resolve—The choice offered—Marriage of Alfred and Elswitha—Sudden illness of the bridegroom—Connubial affection—Passage in Boethius—Famine in England—St. Swithun—Children of Elswitha—Her happiness, and fondness for her husband—Athelney—The Danes—Dangers—Generosity of Alfred—Monastery founded—Alfred's Will—Eadburga and Elswitha—St. Mary's, Newminster—Learning of Ethelfleda—Lady of Mercia—Her numerous fortresses—The captive Welsh Queen—Fleance, son of Banquo—Ancient Welsh customs—Candle-bearer's perquisites—Death of Ethelfleda—Mourned by King Edward—Elfwina dispossessed by her uncle—Ethelfleda buried in St. Peter's, Gloucester.

A SINGULARLY romantic legendary account exists of the first introduction of Alfred the Great to his future consort Elswitha. Alfred, like Haroun al Rashid, was fond of visiting and informing himself of the condition of every class of his subjects. On one occasion he set out, accompanied by a courtier named Ethelbert, and in

his rambles stopped at the house of Albanac, a chieftain of rank and power, whose name would indicate his descent to have been rather British than Saxon. This nobleman received his sovereign with welcome, and his wife and three daughters, all of whom were extremely beautiful, attended on him, as was the custom. The dignified deportment of Elswitha, one of the young Saxon ladies, and the grace and elegance of her person, eclipsed that of her sisters at supper, when waiting upon the King. Alfred was much attracted with her charms, and praised her beauty in glowing terms. The impression made upon him was observed by Albanac, who, when the company separated for the night, communicated his suspicions to his wife. The King, on his part, at retiring, had confided to Ethelbert his admiration of Elswitha, who, with a courtier's tact, approved of his choice. Next morning, when day broke, Albanac presented himself at the door of his royal guest, requesting immediate admittance. The King bade him enter; on which, to his surprise, he beheld Albanac, with a drawn sword in his hand, conducting his three daughters, who, clad in the deepest mourning, seemed overwhelmed with the most poignant distress. "What is it I see?" exclaimed Alfred. "A father," returned Albanac, "whose honour is more dear to him than life itself. You are my King, and I am your subject, but not your slave. You are well acquainted with my illustrious ancestors, and it is now proper you should know my sentiments. Last night you discovered a particular attention to my daughter. If you have conceived the idea of dishonouring my house, you see the sword that shall in an instant sacrifice these unhappy victims, willing to sacrifice themselves; but if a pure flame is

kindled in your breast, my alliance will not disgrace the crown: choose, therefore, and name her that is born to such distinguished honour!"

This somewhat abrupt proceeding, the legend goes on to say, did not displease Alfred, who, appreciating the noble and daring courage of the father of Elswitha, immediately professed his readiness to make her his wife, and she was soon afterwards Queen. That the King had chosen his partner wisely, was proved by subsequent events. Elswitha was virtuous and amiable, and inspired her noble husband with a lasting affection for her.

It is a subject of pleasing contemplation to trace the feelings of Alfred on the subject of connubial affection, which appears from his writings, wherein he expresses himself in terms of enthusiasm. A passage in Boethius, translated by Alfred, runs thus: some additions to the original being made by the King, these are given in italics:—[1]

"Liveth not thy wife also! She is exceedingly prudent and very modest. She has excelled all other women in purity. I may, in a few words, express all her merit; this is, that in all her manners she is like her father. She lives now for thee, *thee alone. Hence, she loves nought else but thee. She has enough of every good in this present life, but she has despised it all for thee alone. She has shunned it all, because only she has not thee also. This one thing is now wanting to her.* Thine absence makes her think that all which she possesses is nothing. Hence for thy love she is wasting, and full nigh dead with tears and sorrow." "Alfred dwells on the 'vivat tibi' of Boethius with manifest delight, and dilates upon the thought as if with fond recollections of

[1] Sharon Turner.

the conduct of his own wife, who shared his adversity with him."

Such legends as these are valuable as showing the habits and manners of the times, and prove how lawless and turbulent they were, when no confidence was placed in the honour of those the highest in power, when their gratification was at stake. Alfred himself was superior to the period at which he lived, and a few years afterwards suspicion would not have fallen on him; but at this time, he was only just come to the crown, and, being still very young, had not as yet had an opportunity of proving to his subjects his rare and remarkable worth.[1]

The real history of his marriage is merely that his wife Elswitha was the daughter of Ethelfrid,[2] surnamed Mucil, Ealdorman of Mercia; and that her mother was nobly born, being Edburga of the royal house of Mercia. Alfred was just twenty when he married, and during the nuptial festivities, which lasted several days, he was seized with an alarming malady, from which, it is said, "he enjoyed scarcely a day's respite during more than twenty years of his useful and active life."[3]

He never, however, allowed the acute pain of his malady to interfere with his manly resolution; and by the force of his extraordinary will, contrived to master his bodily sufferings, which are, indeed, said rather to have strengthened his mental energy.

The year of Elswitha's marriage, A.D. 868, was noted for a terrible famine, felt in all parts of Europe, so that in some places the living are said to have fed upon the

[1] Lingard, however, alludes to opinions of his character in early life, which probably accounts for the suspicions of Mucil: he quotes St. Neot and Asser.

[2] Lingard. [3] Lappenberg.

bodies of the dead! And it is further said, that this famine was followed, in 869, "by a great mortality of man and beast." The tutor both of Alfred and his father, Swithun, Bishop of Winchester, died at this time, and desired to be buried in the open churchyard, instead of the chancel of the minster, where the ashes of the great reposed, "that the drops of rain might wet his grave; thinking that no vault was so good to cover his grave as that of heaven." The popular Scottish proverb and superstition contained in the following lines, probably arose from the expression he used:—

"Saint Swithin's Day, if thou dost rain,
For forty days it will remain;
Saint Swithin's Day, if thou be fair,
For forty days 'twill rain nae mair."

Asser, who frequently saw the mother of Elswitha, calls her a venerable woman, "illustrious and pious," and from the time of her husband's decease, she had ever lived the life of a true widow.[1]

Elswitha had five children, Edward the Elder, Ethelwold, Ethelfleda, Ethegitha, and Elswitha, of each of whom some account will be given. Besides these she had several who died in infancy, one of whom, Edmund, had been intended by Alfred for his successor on the throne. Elswitha was deeply attached to her husband, and to judge from his character, her own conduct, and the merits of her family, she was not only a good wife, but a happy mother.

The companion of Alfred in prosperity, Elswitha shared with him his adverse fortunes. At a moment when almost every friend and adherent had forsaken the King, we find him contriving the erection of a fortress,

[1] Sharon Turner.

in a place of security, his first object being to remove Elswitha and her children to a spot free from danger, which he happily succeeded in effecting. After nine successive years spent in bravely encountering those fierce enemies of England, the Danes, Alfred retreated for temporary security into the little isle of Athelney,[1] a spot of rising ground on the north side of Stanmoor, bounded on the north-west by the river Thone, over which there is a wooden bridge, still called Athelney Bridge. "Alfred built a castle in Athelney, and made it a very strong hold, and forcing a way unto it by a bridge or causey; for guard of the way, he built on either side a tower." This ever-memorable place was anciently environed with almost impassible marshes and morasses, and could only be approached by a boat:[2] it had, moreover, a very large wood of alders, "which harboured stags, wild goats, and other beasts." Such was the place of refuge of the King and Queen and their children, who lodged in a small house belonging to St. Athelwine, formerly a hermit there, son of King Knugilfus.[3]

During this period of adversity, it is on record that Alfred experienced many privations, one of the greatest being the want of provisions: so that of a severe winter, which set in under such unfavourable circumstances for the royal family, a characteristic tale is told. The King's attendants were one day out on the perilous expedition of fishing, for the Danes were near,—a requisite duty to provide for the daily necessity, from which Alfred and Elswitha were alone exempted. The King employed himself with reading, the Queen with her domestic occupations. At this moment a poor pilgrim,

[1] A contraction of the Saxon word, meaning "Isle of Nobles."
[2] Malmesbury.
[3] Biog. Brit.

passing the gate, implored the monarch for a morsel of food. Alfred, calling to Elswitha, requested her to give the man a portion of her provision. It is said that their whole store consisted of but one loaf, and the equally humane Queen hesitated a moment in the act of charity. Alfred, however, was not to be deterred by any selfish consideration from his generous purpose. He readily bestowed the half of his slender store on the mendicant, consoling himself and his Queen with the reflection, that the benevolent hand which could supply the necessities of five thousand with but five loaves and two fishes, would doubtless provide for their future wants. Satisfaction and resignation accompanied this beneficent action, which was rewarded by the speedy return of their companions, laden with an ample store of provisions.[1]

After Alfred quitted this retreat, and had subdued his enemies, he founded on the spot a monastery for Benedictine monks, to commemorate his gratitude to Heaven for the shelter it had afforded to himself and his family: this religious foundation was liberally endowed both by Alfred and his successors on the throne.[2]

[1] Spelman relates the story of the pilgrim as of his mother, not his wife, though he thinks it was the latter who was with the King; Judith having returned into France, and Osburga being dead. After the deed of charity, the King, falling asleep, dreamt of St. Cuthbert, who came to announce to him, in reward of his charity, that he should be restored to his kingdom, and that his servants would speedily return with abundance of fish. His mother, who also had fallen asleep, was called by the King, who declared his dream to her, and learnt she had dreamt the same thing, which, while they were yet busy recounting to each other, was in part realised by the return of their attendants.—Spelman.

[2] A jewel of gold, enamelled like a bulla or amulet, to hang round the neck, circumscribed, in Saxon characters, "Alfred ordered me to be made," was found there. It is now in the Ashmolean

Elswitha enjoyed the society of her beloved and excellent husband for nearly twenty-eight years:[1] the two last which preceded his death, which occurred A.D. 900, were marked by a great increase of suffering from the malady by which he was afflicted.[2] During the latter part of their union, the royal pair, hand in hand, restored and patronized many female religious communities. The nunnery at Shaftesbury was founded by the King, and when completed, Alfred placed in it his daughter Ethelgive, who assumed the government of the infant establishment, while several females of the first distinction hastened to profess themselves her disciples.[3]

Elswitha herself founded the Abbey of St. Mary, at Winchester, aided, as some say, by the King. This edifice, known also as Nunnaminstre, or the New Minstre, was situated in the east part of the city, on the north side of the cathedral, with which it was parallel; but from the unhealthiness of its situation, and too great proximity to the cathedral, was afterwards removed to Hyde Meadows.

King Egbert had entailed his estates, by his will, on his male descendants, to the exclusion of females: "to the spear-side and not to the spindle-side." Ethelwulf, his

Museum. An engraving of it may be seen in Gough's Camden (70). —Turner.

The monastery Alfred built in Athelney was of wood. It was borne upon four main wooden pillars, and enclosed round about with cancellings or chancel-work; they having not then the use of glass, nor other means to shut out the violence of weather, and yet let in sufficient light, than by fine open-work carvings, and lattices of window-work, of which (to express the curiosity) Malmesbury says that they were carved *opere sphærico*. According to Spelman (see notes), there were four cancells, choirs, or chapells, surrounding the *area* or *auditory* of the church.—Spelman, Life of Alfred, p. 166.

[1] Speed. [2] Walter Raleigh. [3] Lingard.

son, after making his second son Ethelbert King of Kent, bequeathed at his death to the remaining three, certain lands, which were to come eventually to the survivor. Alfred, surviving his two elder brothers, made a new agreement, that the survivor should enjoy the personal estate of the other, and with it the lands bequeathed by Ethelwulf. Before, however, Alfred's will was made, he assembled the Thanes of Wessex, at Langdon, "lest any one should say that I had defrauded my kinsfolk;" for by the same agreement it had been stipulated with Ethelred, that all real property, acquired by grant or purchase, should be left to the nephews of the survivor. Wherefore Alfred's will states, that if any of the lands which he left to females had descended to him from Egbert, he desired his heirs male to take the lands, and give to the females an equivalent in money. The Saxon Thanes having approved the King's title to the property, the following day he divided his lands among his two sons, his three daughters, his two nephews, his cousin Osferth, and his wife Elswitha. To each of his sons he left five hundred pounds; and to the Queen and the three Princesses, her daughters, four hundred pounds each, at that time no inconsiderable sum of money.[1] Besides these, he left certain sums to his ealdormen, servants, and bishops; fifty mancuses of gold to fifty priests, fifty to the poor ministers of God, fifty to poor people in distress, and fifty to the church in which he should be buried.[2] To Queen Elswitha he also bequeathed three towns; Wantage, the birth-place of Alfred, was one of these, where stood a palace of the Saxon Kings.[3] The

[1] Biog. Brit. [2] Lingard.

[3] Lysons's Mag. Brit.

manor of Ethandune,[1] with other Berkshire lands, were also mentioned in the will of Alfred as left to Queen Elswitha. She had also other property, some of which was bestowed by herself on Glastonbury, and afterwards confirmed to that church by King Edgar.[2]

On the death of Alfred, Queen Elswitha retired to the Abbey of St. Mary, Winchester. Eadburga, daughter of Edward the Elder, was abbess of this establishment which followed the Benedictine rule, and was so popular that her name as patroness of the abbey was joined to that of the Virgin Mary, to whom it was dedicated. Elswitha, admiring the virtues of her grand-daughter Eadburga, and also witnessing the tranquillity enjoyed by her daughter the Abbess of Shaftesbury, resolved to pass her declining years in religious seclusion. In the establishment and society of the Abbess Eadburga she died, A.D. 904, having survived her excellent husband only four years.

The remains of King Alfred were at first interred in the Cathedral of Winchester; and we learn from Asser that a magnificent monument of precious porphyry was erected to his honour who was renowned as "the truth-teller"—one of the most noble of all charac-

[1] Eddington, near Hungerford.—Lysons.

[2] Winchcomb—the name of which signifies "the Valley of Battle," given, in A.D. 965, to Glastonbury by Queen Elswitha—was still in the hands of the monks of that establishment at the time of the Norman survey.

The Saxon Queen, says Turner, "had her separate property; for, in a gift of land, she gives fifteen mancuses, calling them a part of the land of her own power. She had also officers peculiar to her household; for the persons with whose consent and testimony she made the grant, are called *her* nobles."

teristics in either sovereign or subject.[1] In compliance with his father's will Edward the Elder caused the edifice of Newminster to be completed, and it was consecrated on the advent of St. Judoc, A.D. 903, being at the first only a house and chapel for the learned monk Grimbald. The foundation and chief parts of the building had been laid and built by Alfred during his life, and Grimbald, the first to set the King to the undertaking, was designed by him to be the first Abbot. The monastery was situated on the north side of Winchester Cathedral, with which it was parallel, and there wanted room for some of its parts: it was placed so near the cathedral that the singing-men in the choir of the one were easily heard into the choir of the other, and this gave occasion of many differences about it. The place being so "straight and hard to be enlarged, the King was fain to pay the Bishop a mark of gold for every foot of land which he was forced to buy, that he might have commodity sufficient for the shops or work-houses for his monks' offices[2] belonging to the monastery.[3]

Edward the Elder, on the completion of the structure, placed in it secular canons, under St. Grimbald as abbot;[4] after which he caused the remains of his father, King Alfred, to be conveyed thither, with solemn pomp and magnificence, from the adjacent cathedral. The body, also, of Queen Elswitha, which had been at first entombed in St. Mary's Abbey, Newminster, was also, by his orders, conveyed thither, to be deposited with that of her husband. It was not, however, ordained

[1] Asser says this tomb was erected in St. Peter's, Winchester.
[2] Annals of Winchcomb, 905.
[3] Spelman.
[4] Butler

that they should repose on this spot of their own selection; its contiguity to Winchester Cathedral, and unhealthiness of the situation, caused the subsequent removal of the religious establishment to Hyde Meadows, without the city, in the reign of Henry I., at which period it was known as St. Grimbald's Monastery. The learned Beauclerc and his Saxon Queen Maude, the descendant of Alfred and Elswitha, in whom were united the interests of the Norman and Saxon cause, attended in person the removal of the bones of that king and queen to the new edifice of Hyde Abbey. The monks of St. Grimbald's, in solemn procession on the occasion, carried with them the relics of three saints, as well as the remains of Alfred and Elswitha. During the civil war of 1142, Hyde Abbey was burnt to the ground, and a great part of its treasures perished in the flames: the edifice was, however, rebuilt in the reign of Henry II., and restored to its former rank and splendour, which it retained till the destruction of religious houses at the Reformation, at which period it was reduced to a heap of ruins.[1]

Ethelfleda, the first-born of Alfred's children by Queen Elswitha, was esteemed the most learned, as she was the most remarkable, woman of her time, and singularly distinguished for masculine spirit and abilities. This princess conferred on her country many benefits; and her promptitude and valour saved it more than once from those rapacious ravagers, the Danes. In talent she more nearly resembled her glorious father than any of his children; and equally to her mother was she indebted

[1] In our own times, the site of the building where Alfred and Elswitha rested, gives place to the county Bridewell, a few remnants marking the antiquity of the hallowed spot.

for those noble qualities which made her illustrious. At a very early age Ethelfleda was married to Ethelred, Earl of Mercia, who, being in an infirm state of health, was frequently prevented attending to the care of government. His place was, on these occasions, well supplied by his wise and learned consort, whose great foresight and prudence in the conduct of public affairs were acknowledged from the first. There are records extant which prove that she took part even in her father's councils.

After Alfred's death, Edward the Elder bestowed anew on his sister and her husband conjointly, or perhaps only confirmed, the government of Mercia, with the title of "Subregulus Merciorum" to the Earl. Accordingly in an instrument of Werfred, Bishop of Worcester, to that church, made A.D. 904, the royal couple are both together styled in the Saxon tongue Æthred, the Alderman or Duke, and Ethelfled, the *Lords* of Mercia. A period of twenty-four years must have elapsed between the date of this charter and the one first mentioned. Other charters granted by this princess bear her signature alone, thus "Ego Ethelfled consensi."

Ethelfleda's piety, according to the opinion of that time, was great. After the birth of a daughter, she resolved to devote herself solely to a life of heroism and the care of her country's good, instead of indulging in the happiness of maternity; and her husband, sickly and weak both in mind and body, did not oppose her will. She, therefore, threw off all the weakness of her sex from that time, and appears in history rather as a general than as a mother or wife. She founded monasteries, as one at Gloucester testifies, and it was there that Ethelred, dying, was entombed, in 912.

After his death, conjointly with her brother, Edward the Elder, she exerted all her energies to repel the Danes, and by her counsels and acts greatly aided the King.

As soon as Ethelfleda became a widow, Edward made a partition of Mercia, apparently with her full consent, annexing London and Oxford to his own dominions of Wessex, and committing the other portion of the government to her care.[1] From this time till her death, a period of eight years, Ethelfleda held sovereign rule, with the title of Lady of Mercia, and the extraordinary martial talents she exhibited during this season of power procured her the honourable titles not only of "Queen," but of "King" also, as if those of Countess-lady, which she possessed, were inadequate to express her heroism.

Her attention was chiefly directed to the necessity of erecting fortresses in different parts of the kingdom, to prevent the Danes from extending their territory, and of checking their inroads; for many fastnesses had fallen into the hands of those dangerous intruders, who could thus hold the whole country in fear and subjection. At Hereford, and at Witham in Essex, Edward built strong places; and in the same year of her becoming a widow, the Saxon Chronicle records that Ethelfleda, "on the Holy Eve called the Invention of the Holy Cross," came to Shergate, and built the fortress there, and another at Bridgenorth in the same year. A monastery, dedicated to St. Barnabas, was likewise founded by the "Lady of Mercia," at Brunnesburgh,[2] that year, which shortly after fell to decay.

One of the royal palaces of King Offa was at Tamworth, whence many charters of succeeding sovereigns

[1] Bromton, Leland, Dugdale. [2] In Cheshire.

were dated. This town became, in 913, the residence of Ethelfleda, who restored it from the ruinous condition in which it had been placed by the incursions of the Danes. She erected a tower there, "in the fore part of the summer," says the Chronicle, on the artificial mount upon which the present castle stands. In the same year, before Lammas, "the Lady of Mercia," built a fortress at Stafford; this being the first authentic record given of that town.

Early in the summer of 914, Ethelfleda built a fortress at Eddesbury, and late in the autumn of that year, another at Warwick. Dugdale, who refers the foundation of Warwick Castle to Ethelfleda, tells us that there was a mound of the same form there, and with terraces similar to that of Durham Castle. In 915, Ethelfleda caused the dungeon of Warwick Castle to be made, which is a strong tower or platform, upon a large and high mount of earth, artificially raised (such being usually placed towards the side of a castle or fort which is least defensible), the substance whereof is yet to be seen.

In 915, "after mid-winter," was built the fortress at Cherburg, and that at Warburton; and the same year, before mid-winter, one at Runcorn,[1] also the town of

[1] Runcorn, in Cheshire, on the banks of the Mersey, was originally built by the renowned Ethelfleda. The river here suddenly contracts from a considerable breadth to a narrow channel, by a projecting point of land from the Lancashire side; and opposite Runcorn-gap, as the above strait is denominated, Ethelfleda erected a castle to defend this extremity of her vast domain.

"Not a vestige of this building can be seen; but its site is marked by the name of *the castle*, given to a triangular piece of land, surrounded with a mound of earth, jutting out into the river, guarded on the water-side by ledges of rocks and broken precipices, and cut off from the land by a ditch six yards in width. The parochi

Warham, and Fadesbury, both named by Roger of Wendover.

In those days there were very few defensible places, such as we now call castles, which rendered it very difficult for the English to defend themselves from the incursions of foreign invaders; a defect which gave great advantages to William of Normandy, who was so sensible of the fact, that after the victory of Hastings, he neglected not to raise "a sufficient store of forts throughout the realm."[1] Ethelfleda had, before the Norman Prince, perceived the danger which this deficiency caused in England, and her exertions in this respect, to defend the country from the Danes, cannot be too highly appreciated. Ingulphus justly observes of this Princess, who, by some one, is styled a "restorer of the brick," that, in respect of the fortresses she built, and the armies she managed, she might have been thought a man."

Ethelfleda exerted herself successfully against the Welsh, preventing them coming to the aid of the Danes. This glorious achievement was accomplished in 916, when "the Lady of Mercia," at the head of a large army, entered Wales, and stormed Brecknock, where she took the "King's wife," and thirty-four of

church stands above the Castle-rock: its foundation was probably coeval with the castle, but was certainly prior to the Conquest, since Nigel, Baron of Halton, bestowed it on his brother Wolfrith, a priest, in the time of the Conqueror.—Britton and Brayley.

When Alfred repaired and restored the different castles which had been demolished by the Danes, he, for the first time, built of stone many of those which had formerly been constructed of earth: of this number was Norwich Castle. "Alfred's Castle" there was afterwards entirely destroyed by the Danish King, Sweyn, father of Canute the Great."

[1] Dugdale, Saxon Chronicle.

her attendants, prisoners.[1] This event, by which the Welsh became tributary to Mercia, occurred within three nights of the feast of St. Cirisius, and in Wales was called "*Gwaith y Dinas Newydd,*" or "the Battle of the New City." The object of Ethelfleda, in this expedition, was to punish the Welsh for having put to death the innocent Abbot Egbert.

The Queen whom Ethelfleda made her captive, was Angharad, the wife of Owen. The name she bore was correspondent to the English word Anne, and was exceedingly popular in Wales, three other Queens being distinguished by it, all worthy of notice. The first Angharad was Queen of Roderic the Great, and mother of three princes, among whom that monarch divided his dominions prior to his decease, building for each, in his peculiar district, a royal residence; from which time the brothers were known as "the three crowned Princes," each wearing, on his helmet, a coronet of gold, or broad head-band, indented upwards, and set and wrought with precious stones.[2] The only daughter of Meredith, son of the Queen Angharad, whom Ethelfleda captured, bore her grandmother's name, and married the ambitious Llewelyn ap Seisyllt, who, in her right, mounted the throne A.D. 1003, and, as he afterwards added North Wales to his dominions, united the three principalities which Roderic had divided among his sons, from one of whom, in fact, he claimed his descent.

Both the houses of Tudor and Stuart have been derived from Roderic the Great; the wife of Rhys ap Twdwr, ancestor of Owen Tudor, the father of

[1] Powel, Caradoc of Llancarvan.

[2] Sax. Chron., Caradoc of Llan: "Y Tri Tywysoc Talaethiæ" (the three bandlet-wearing princes).

Henry VII., being descended from Angharad, Queen of Llewelyn ap Seisyllt, by a second marriage with Cynfyn Hirdref. The house of Stuart is derived from Nesta,[1] grand-daughter of Angharad; her parents being Griffith ap Llewelyn and Ranulf. Fleance, son of the Banquo murdered by Macbeth, sought safety and shelter in the court of Griffith, in North Wales, but returned the kind reception there given him by the seduction of the Princess Nesta, or Agnes, who gave birth to a son, named Walter.[2] Fleance paid the forfeit of his life for his breach of faith, and the unfortunate Princess was reduced, by her father's orders, to a condition of servitude. The misfortunes of his parents were much felt by their son Walter, whose temper was violent, as is shown by the manner in which he resented insult. Being one day reproached with his ignoble origin by a young man with whom he had quarrelled, he killed him on the spot. To protect himself from punishment, he fled to Scotland, where he succeeded in obtaining a post among the English attendants of Margaret, Queen of Malcolm, and conducted himself so well, that he was soon advanced in the royal favour, and became steward of Scotland, and receiver of the revenues of the realm.[3] From the office held by Walter, he derived the surname of Stewart, and his descendants bore the same; not only the royal house of Stuart, but many noble Scottish families are derived from this source.

It may be thought curious to mention here some of the ancient Welsh customs as concerned their Queens.

[1] Nesta is used in Wales for the Greek Agnes: in the Greek, it means *chaste*. The French write it Ignatia.—Camden's Remains.

The same name applied to a man is exemplified in that of Ignatius Loyola.

[2] Caradoc, Lluyd.

[3] Warrington.

The Queen had, by the laws of Wales, a fine for *saraad*, or offence, which might be committed three ways:—

Firstly: "When her protection shall be violated," that is, "the right to conduct beyond the bounds of the country, without pursuit and without obstruction."

Secondly: "When she shall be struck in anger;" or,

Thirdly: "When a thing shall be forcibly taken out of her hand."

The fine for this very unmanly treatment of a crowned head was to be only "*one-third* of the King's saraad, the gold and silver excepted. Now, the fine for the King's saraad was as follows:—"One hundred kine; a silver rod, with three knobs at the top, and three at the bottom, which shall reach from the ground to the King's face, when he shall sit in his chair, and as thick as his ring-finger; and a golden cup, which shall hold the King's full draught, and as thick as the nail of a ploughman, when he has ploughed seven years; and a gold cover, *as broad as the King's face*, and as thick as the edge of the cup." Now, as the gold and silver was to be *excepted* in the fine for the Queen's "saraad," the value of little more than thirty-three cows was all the compensation that she was entitled to for the insults above named.

The Queen occupies a low station, also, in the arrangements made for the interior of the palace. Every one of the King's officers has an appropriate place in the hall, but the King's wife occupies her solitary chamber,[1] where she is waited upon by a single attendant handmaiden; a steward, "who is to serve her in her chamber with meat and drink;" and a page, "who is to

[1] In Brittany, even at the present day, the wife is the least cared for of the family, and is expected to attend on the others.

convey messages between the chamber and the hal., keep the keys of her coffers, and supply the chamber," and two or three inferior attendants: "and it is further enacted, that when the Queen shall will a song in her chamber, let the bard sing a song respecting Camlan,[1] and *that not loud,* lest the hall be disturbed." So that it would seem her enjoyments were to be considered only as second to those of her guests and subjects, who assembled to carouse over their meal.

Among the inferior attendants of the Queen, one was a candle-bearer, whose pleasant perquisite is to be "all the tops he shall bite off the candles, also the broken bread and fragments that fall over the Queen's dish."

No female domestics seem to have been employed in the King's household, except the Queen's hand-maiden, the baking-woman, and the laundress. These last two were allowed the right of protection,—the baking-woman as far as she could throw her kneading-bat, the laundress as far as she could throw her washing-beetle.

These laws, generally speaking, place the value of every ordinary woman at one-third of that of her husband, and arrange that, in cases of separation by mutual consent, the joint property should be fairly shared between them.

"If husband and wife separate, the husband has the swine and the sheep; if only one kind, to be shared. Goats are to the husband. Of the children, the eldest and youngest to the husband, the middlemost to the wife. The household furniture to be shared, but the milking-vessels, except the pail, to the wife; the

[1] The battle in which Arthur fell.

husband, the drinking-vessels and riddle; the wife, the sieve. The husband has the upper stone of the hand-mill; the wife, the lower one. The upper garments are the wife's; the under garments, the husband's; and the kettle, coverlet, bolster, fuel, axe, settle, and all the hooks except one, the pan, trivet, axe, bill, ploughshare, flax, linseed, wool, and the house-bag, to the wife; if any gold, it is to be shared between them. The husband to have the corn above the ground and under, and the barn, the poultry, and one of the cats; the rest to the wife. To the wife, the meat in the brine, and the cheese in the brine; those hung up belong to the husband. The butter, meat, and cheese, in cut, belong to the wife; also, as much meal as she can carry between her arms and knees, from the store-room to the house. Their apparel to be divided."[1]

"The wife had an exclusive right to her jewellery and wearing apparel," and the wife of a "privileged or *free* man might lend her under garment, mantle, headcloth, and shoes, without consent of her husband, and can give meat and drink unrestrictedly, and can lend the furniture. The wife of the 'taeog,' or bondsman, could only lend her head-covering, and of her household utensils, only her sieve and riddle; and these, but at the distance she can be heard calling, with her feet on the threshold. The reasons for these restrictions, in regard to the wife of the bondsman, was probably owing to the fact that the household goods, and even the clothing, were the property of the bondsman's master."[2]

On the capture of Queen Angharad, the Welsh King, Owen, fled to Derby, where he was kindly received

[1] Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales, p. 38.

[2] Miss Lawrance's History of Woman in England.

by the Danes. Ethelfleda, apprised of this, followed Owen thither with her army; and in 918, the Saxon Chronicle informs us, that "with the help of God, before Lammas," she conquered that city, with all that thereto belonged. The Queen, on this memorable occasion, had nearly lost her life through her heroism. Speed compares her to Zenobia, saying, that her person was in the greatest danger when endeavouring to enter the gate, multitudes of the Danes resisting her progress; she, however, persevered and succeeded in entering the town, though many of her officers fell in the encounter, and four of her warriors, who guarded her royal person, and were most dear to her, were slain when fighting by her side, by Owen, the Welsh King;[1] a circumstance which was to her "a cause of sorrow." Caradoc, describing this struggle, says, that when Gwyane, Lord of the Isle of Ely, Ethelfleda's steward, perceived the Queen's danger, he set fire to the gates, and rushing furiously on the Britons, entered the town; on which, Owen, finding he was overmatched, chose rather to fall by the sword, than cowardly to yield himself to a woman. Boadicea appears revived in this account.

The year 920 witnessed the recovery of Leicester and York from her enemies, the Danes. Leicester was taken early in the year, without loss, and the greater part of the army that belonged to it, submitted to her. At this period the character of Ethelfleda again reminds us forcibly of her illustrious father. The historian of the city of Leicester[2] says, "she relieved in many places the distresses of mankind, which the horrors of war had made miserable. The city of Leicester she

[1] Saxon Chronicle. [2] Thoresby.

beheld with the tenderest compassion, which had been honoured by a royal residence, but whose beauty and strength had fallen to decay by the annihilating power of war. Its miserable inhabitants she succoured; its wasted dwellings she bade to rise from their ruinous heaps in pleasing order. She repaired its fortifications, and built a wall that encompassed the city, of such amazing strength that it is called by Matthew Paris *indissoluble.* "The foundation of the wall is discoverable in many places at this day; and such is the tenacity of the mortar, that whenever the inhabitants of Leicester have occasion to remove any part of the foundation, the stones of which it was built, are found almost inseparable."

After the reduction of Derby by Ethelfleda, the Yorkists promised, and confirmed, some by agreement, and some with oaths, that they would be in her interest,[1] On the submission of York, the independant organisation of the "Seven Burghs" was broken up.[2]

After an eight years' reign, and many glorious acts, Ethelfleda died at Tamworth. This event, which occurred twelve nights before Midsummer 920, was felt by the public who loved and venerated her, as their own private loss, and deeply mourned by King Edward, who, at the time death deprived him of this beloved sister and faithful ally, was staying at Stamford. Directly the intelligence of the death of Ethelfleda reached him, the King rode to Tamworth, where he received the allegiance of all the people of Mercia. Not

[1] Saxon Chronicle.

[2] The Five Burghs were "Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, and Stamford. Chester and York could only be joined in a more direct alliance; but when there was a common action among them, they were called the 'Seven Burghs.'"

only the subjects of Ethelfleda rendered homage to Edward, but the three Kings of North Wales sought him for their lord; and on his proceeding to Nottingham, which he secured and fortified, all the Mercians there, whether Danish or English, espoused his cause. Thus the influence of the royal Lady of Mercia, even after her death, procured for her brother the universal homage of those tribes whom she had compelled to acknowledge her power.

A share of power for a time was permitted by Edward to rest in the hands of Elfwina, only child of Ethelfleda, who had been formerly placed by her mother under the King's guardianship,[1] but of this she was afterwards deprived by Edward, on the plea that she had promised marriage to Reynold, the Danish King, "*without his knowledge.*" Whether or not this was a true charge, the Princess was "deprived of all authority,"[2] and conveyed as an honourable captive into Wessex. Her imprisonment took place "about three weeks before mid-winter," so that the duration of her power was short. From this time the name of Ethelfleda's daughter disappears from English history, Mercia being annexed by Edward to his own dominions. Caradoc of Llancarvan considers that Edward's unjust conduct to his niece brought upon him the troubles which followed in his kingdom. Turner, however, remarks that, in the latter part of Edward's reign, a peculiar spirit seemed to have excited the Anglo-Danes; an argument in favour of Edward having been obliged to act as he did from motives of personal security, and to defend himself from the danger of Elfwina's directing her power against the security of the State.

[1] Caradoc of Llancarvan.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, Palgrave.

The remains of Ethelfleda were deposited in St. Peter's, Gloucester, in the southern porch, where they were discovered in the time of Archbishop Thurstan, on the occasion of the foundations of the church being enlarged.[1] The following lines are translated from Henry of Huntingdon, on the fact of the contemporaries of this princess honouring her with the title of King:—

"Mighty Elfleda! maiden, thou should'st bear
The name of Man:—though Nature cast thy frame
In Woman's softer mould—yet he could fear
Thy matchless might! Let him resign his claim,
And, maiden, do thou change thy sex's name.
In grace, a queen—be hence a king in might,
And ages shall renounce proud Cæsar's fame,
To gaze on thine, as on a fairer light!
So, maiden, fare thee well! surpassing queen, good night!"[2]

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[1] Malmsbury.

[2] O Elfleda potens, &c.

EGWINA, ELFLEDA, EDGIFA, AND ELFGIVA,

QUEENS OF EDWARD THE ELDER AND EDMOND THE PIOUS.

CONTENTS.

Romantic tale of Athelstan's mother—The loves of Egwina and Edward—Dream of the Shepherd's daughter—The nurse of the King's children—Adoption of Egwina—The bright light—Edward's second wife Elfleda; her seven children—His third wife Edgifa—Edgifa's lawsuit and will—Athelstan and Beatrice—Goda's dishonesty—Education of the family of Edward the Elder—Eadburga the nun; her choice—Edward's death, and his son Ethelwerd's—Athelstan named as successor—He provides for his family—Beatrice marries Sihtric, King of Northumberland—Edgifa marries Charles the Simple—Her trials and story—Edgifa and Elfgifa sent to Germany—Their marriage-List of the sisters—Hugh the Great and Edilda—The marriage presents—Revived fortunes of Edgifa and her son, Louis d'Outremer—Restoration and imprudence—Harshness of Louis to his mother—The widow of Edward the Elder still goes on with her lawsuit—Edmund the Pious—St. Dunstan—The precipice—Elfgiva—Legend—Explanation of the dream—Edmond assassinated—Reay Cross on Stanmore—Monasteries—Edred and St. Dunstan—Edwy the Tyrant; his ill-usage of his grandmother—Edgar re-establishes her in her rights—She bestows her property on the Church—Her death.

THE marriage of Edward the Elder with the beautiful maiden Egwina is not an ascertained fact; but she was

the mother of one of the greatest and most worthy of the Kings of England, and the preference of Alfred for him above his other grandchildren, as well as of Edward above all his sons, might lead to the conclusion that he was considered legitimate, although his birth was brought forward as a reproach to the good and learned Athelstan by the disaffected amongst his subjects. The legend of the loves of Egwina and Edward is told by several chroniclers: by William of Malmesbury, who at the same time calls her "illustris fœmina;" and Florence, who does the same, naming her "mulier nobilissima." It is, therefore, by no means improbable that she really was the wife of Prince Edward. The story is thus told:—

In the time of King Alfred there was a shepherd's daughter, a young maiden of extraordinary beauty, who had so singular a vision in her sleep that it became the theme of the whole neighbourhood, and reached the King's ears. She dreamt that as she lay on her bed, a bright light, as of a full moon, shone forth from her body and illumined all England. The nurse of King Alfred's children was told of this dream, which by her was repeated to the Queen, who told it to her husband. Alfred was so much struck with the fact, that he had the maiden sent for, and received her into his house, adopting her from that time and treating her as his own child. She remained, therefore, under the nurse's care. Prince Edward, who was not at the time at home, returned in due course, and visiting his nurse, was astonished and delighted with the addition to the family. The extreme beauty of Egwina, which seemed to make an impression on all, did not fail to fascinate the young prince. Whether Egwina's birth was known to King

Alfred to be noble, and that, aware of her having been concealed as the shepherd's daughter, he did not oppose the passion of his son, or whether they were united before he knew of it, is not ascertained. Athelstan, and a sister called Beatrice, were born to Edward; and from the first his subjects then, and the world since, might agree that he was the bright light of his mother's dream, for he filled all England with a glory never known before.[1]

Egwina appears to have died immediately after the birth of her daughter, and Edward was free to make what alliance he pleased. Very soon after her death he married Elfleda, daughter of the Saxon Earl, Etheline. He had not then succeeded to the crown, but in 901 he was crowned, with his queen, in great pomp at Kingston-upon-Thames.

Elfleda bore seven children to her husband, and Edward found himself a widower for the second time, for her life seems to have ended prematurely. He, however, in a short time appears again as a husband, having married a lady of high birth, named Edgifa, the daughter of Earl Sighelm.

This Queen, almost immediately after her marriage, became involved in the intricacies of a lawsuit. Her father Sighelm had engaged part of his land in a mortgage, and after his death it was redeemed by the oath of Edgifa, which by the Saxon laws was considered as equivalent in value to the worth of the money which Sighelm had paid to the mortgagee, but for which he had neglected to obtain a charter of release.[2] The Queen's will, which may be seen in the Appendix to

[1] Lappenberg, Fl. Wigorn, William of Malmesbury.
[2] Palgrave.

Lye's Saxon Dictionary, where it is translated from the Anglo-Saxon into Latin, throws much light on this singular transaction, and on the habits of Queen Edgifa's days.

In her will, Edgifa declares to the Archbishop of the Convent of Christ's Church, at Canterbury, how the land of Cowling came to her, viz.—"That her father had granted to her the land and deed, as he rightfully acquired it, and his ancestors granted it to him. It happened that her father borrowed thirty pounds of Goda, and delivered to him this land as surety for the money, and he held it seven years. Then it happened that all the Kentish men were in the war at Holme. But Sighelm, her father, was unwilling to set out for the wars in any one's debt, and therefore repaid to Goda the thirty pounds, and bequeathed the land to Edgifa, his daughter. When he had fallen in battle, then Goda denied the payment of the money, and kept possession of the land for six years. Then Berksige Deyring,[1] persisted in affirming it, till at length the nobles who were there, counselled Edgifa to purge the land of her father of so great a sum of money; and she accordingly made oath, in the presence of the whole people at Arlesford, and there cleared her father concerning the repayment, by oath, of the thirty pounds. She was not, however, allowed to enter on possession of the land, until her friends had prevailed upon King Edward to prohibit Goda from holding it any longer, on pain of losing all he possessed; whereupon he gave it up. It happened afterwards, in course of time, that the King expressed so much displeasure to Goda, that he gave him in an account of the deeds and lands which he possessed. And the King, therefore, delivered him

[1] A Saxon lawyer!

and all his privileges, with the deeds and lands, to Edgifa, to dispose of as she pleased. Then she said, that she dared not, for fear of God, so retaliate on him as he had deserved of her; and she restored to him all his lands, except two caracutes at Osterland. But she would not return the deeds until she knew how far he would abide by them in respect of the lands which were to be his." These were, doubtless, the lands held by mortgage from Sighelm; and that Edgifa understood the character of the man whom she had to oppose in this legal contest, is evident by the subsequent events, as the will itself declares, to which we shall have occasion to advert hereafter.

Edgifa had two sons by Edward, Edmund and Edred, and two daughters. Of the second marriage one son remained, and six daughters. Of the first, Athelstan and Beatrice, who were educated at a distance from Edward's court, under the care of his sister, the Lady of Mercia; there, though separated from their step-mother Edgifa, they preserved a tender affection for her, and for the numerous offspring of Edward, their father; of which many proofs occurred after the death of the King.[1]

Edward, in the careful education of his children, followed the example of his father's wisdom. His daughters have been compared to those of Charlemagne, with whom a similar course was adopted. Their early years were devoted to the acquirement of solid knowledge, and the accomplishments prized at the period were theirs: nor was the use of the distaff and spindle neglected by the Princesses; so that their minds and bodies were always occupied—the surest method by which good conduct can be preserved. Very precious

[1] Turner's Anglo-Saxon.

and elaborate specimens in "raiments of wrought needlework" and early English embroidery, are said to have been produced by the diligence of these "King's daughters."[1]

The sons of Edward had equal means afforded them of gaining the information necessary to constitute good princes.

A story is related of Eadburga, the youngest of Edgifa's daughters, when only three years of age. The princess was led by her father into a room, in which the King had previously placed in one part a quantity of rings and bracelets; and a chalice, with a book of the Gospels, in another. The child was desired by her father to make her choice between them, when disregarding the vain ornaments of a transitory existence, she ran to those objects dedicated to religion. Edward, tracing in the infantine act a predilection for the service of Heaven, exclaimed with fervour, as he clasped her in his arms, "Go whither the Divine Spirit calls thee: follow with happy footsteps the spouse whom thou hast chosen!"[2] Accordingly the royal child was consigned

[1] The skill of the daughters of Edward in spinning and weaving is praised in the highest terms by our historians, and they were likewise instructed with the greatest possible care in the art of needlework: so renowned was their talent with the distaff that the term "spinster" is said to have been derived from these royal ladies. With such noble examples before them for contemplation, it is not to be wondered that we learn that the leisure hours of the Saxon women (even of the first rank) were spent in spinning and such like servile employments; neither was it any dishonour for the lady of the house to be among her maids, helping them and performing the duties of the house in common with them, while the lord was with his men, assisting and overlooking them; many instances of which may be brought to prove the ancient simplicity and plainness of their manners.—Strutt's Saxon Antiquities.

[2] William of Malmesbury.

to the care of her grandmother, Queen Elswitha, who resided at the convent at Winchester.. She dwelt, for many years after, among that holy sisterhood, distinguishing herself by acts of piety and humility.[1] Monkish chroniclers relate of her rare humility, that "she would, at night, secretly remove the socks[2] worn by the several nuns, and after having washed and *carefully anointed* them, replace them on the beds of her sleeping companions."[3] Long after her death, the acts of Eadburga were fondly recounted by the religious of the nunneries of Winchester, and Pershore in Worcestershire, at which last place, her "sacred relics had been deposited, but were afterwards exhumed by Bishop Ethelwold and placed in a rich shrine, the Abbess Elfleda having covered them with gold and silver."

[1] Lingard.

[2] *Socca*, or socks, were sometimes made of leather, as it appears these of the nuns were, by the "anointing" mentioned.

[3] "In the eighth and ninth centuries, the Anglo-Saxons wore stockings reaching halfway up the thigh, called by writers of the period "*hose*;" the most general material being linen, although "*skin hose*" and "*leather hose*" are likewise often mentioned. Over these stockings bands of cloth, linen, and leather, were worn, commencing at the ankle and terminating a little below the knee, generally bound round the leg like the haybands of a modern ostler, but sometimes crossing each other, as they are worn to this day by the people of the Abruzzi and the Appenines. In some illuminations of the period a sort of half-stocking is represented over the hose, instead of the bandages, having the tops generally embroidered, and these appear to have been called *socca*, or socks. They wore boots or buskins, but generally shoes (*sceo* or *scho*); slippers also appear to have been worn; called *slype-sceo* and *unhege-sceo*. The shoe is mostly painted down the instep, secured by a thong, the material being commonly leather, but the Anglo-Saxon princes and high ecclesiastical dignitaries are often represented with shoes of gold covered with precious stones. The shoemaker's seems to have been a comprehensive trade, and to have united some that are now

A.D. 925.—At the time of Edward's death he was residing at "Farndon, in Mercia,"[1] which is by some supposed to be Faringdon, in Berkshire.[2] A few days later the King was followed to the tomb by Prince Ethelwerd, the son of Elfleda, his former Queen. Both father and son were interred with regal solemnity in the New Monastery of Winchester, near the remains of Alfred the Great, whom Ethelwerd is said to have greatly resembled in person, manners, and literary attainments. The double loss must have fallen heavily on the bereaved Queen and her family. Ethelwerd, the deceased Prince, had been a youth of great hopes, and perhaps Edward had anticipated his early death; for a few days before he expired, he summoned Athelstan to his presence, and having declared his desire that he should succeed him on the throne, piously admonished him as to his future conduct and mode of government. Thus Edgifa beheld Athelstan, the son of the shepherdess Egwina, raised by his father's will to the throne, in preference to her sons Edmund and Edred, still infants, as well as to the exclusion of Edwin, the surviving brother of Ethelwerd. The choice of Edward seems to have been grounded in this instance on the predilection of his father, the wise Alfred, for this his favourite grandchild, and Athelstan was accordingly crowned, with but one dissenting voice at Kingston.[3]

very distinct businesses. He says in an ancient Anglo-Saxon dialogue: "My craft is very useful and necessary to you. I buy hides and skins, and prepare them by my art, and make of them shoes of various kinds, and none of you can winter without my craft." He subjoins a list of the articles he fabricates:—"Ankle-leathers, shoes, leather hose, bottles, bridle thongs, trappings, flasks, boiling vessels, leather neck-pieces, halters, wallets, and pouches."

[1] Saxon Chronicle. [2] Lysons's Mag. Brit.; Holinshed, Raleigh.

[3] Athelstan is said to have first worn a crown of pure gold.

It was the first care of Athelstan to provide for the future welfare of the numerous family of the deceased King. Within the course of a few months, his sister Beatrice was given away in marriage, some think, sacrificed, to Sihtric, King of the Northumbrian Danes, who was only baptised on the occasion, and died within a year, when much confusion ensued for the succession.

The first and third daughters of Elfleda, Edward's second Queen, devoted themselves to a life of celibacy: these were Edfleda, "who assumed the sacred robes of a nun; and Ethelhilda, who continued to wear a humble lay habit: both renounced the pleasures of this world, and were at their death interred near the remains of their mother at Winchester." Their sister Edgifa was married, during King Edward's life, to Charles the Simple, King of France, and the same year of Athelstan's accession, returned an exile with her son, and placed herself under the protection of the English King.

Edgifa is said to have been distinguished above her sisters for merit and genius. Through the treason of Robert, Count de Vermandois, Charles the Simple had been imprisoned in the Castle of Peronne; while Raoul, son of Richard, Duke of Burgundy, caused himself to be proclaimed King, and crowned at Soissons, A.D. 923, though he acted only as Regent during Charles's imprisonment. Edgifa had made every possible effort to procure the release of her husband, but in vain. She fled to secure her son's life, and after a six years' captivity, the unfortunate Charles died in his prison, worn out with sorrow and misery.

Edgifa returned in sorrow to the home of her childhood, and continued to reside there with her son Louis.

Henry I., son of Conrad, King of the Germans, and

Emperor of the Romans, had demanded for his son Otho a sister of Athelstan in marriage. The English King had four sisters, available alike in beauty, though of dissimilar ages, two of whom he sent to the Emperor; these were Edgifa and Elgiva, children of Elfleda. The Emperor Henry bestowed the former on his own son Otho, who succeeded him in the empire, so that the Princess became eventually Empress of Germany. Her sister Elgifa was given in marriage by her father-in-law, the Emperor Henry,[1] to a personage who is always named as "a Duke who resided near the Alps." Where this undefined locality might be, historians, copying each other, are content to remain ignorant.

Another of the daughters of Edward was given by Athelstan to Louis, Prince of Aquitaine.

The numerous daughters of Edward the Elder may be thus enumerated:—

Beatrice, Queen of Northumberland, wife of Sihtric.
Edfleda and Ethelhilda, nuns.
Edgifa, Queen of Charles the Simple.
Edgifa, wife of Otho, Empress of Germany.
Elgiva, married to "a Duke near the Alps."
Edgiva, wife of Louis, King of Aquitaine.
Elfleda, wife of Louis, King of Provence.
Eadburga, nun at Winchester; and
Edilda, married to Hugh the Great, Count of Paris.

The affairs of France remaining unchanged, it became the policy of Athelstan to reconcile himself with the successful ruler.[2] Charles the Simple was still in captivity, and Hugh the Great, called Count of Paris, was all powerful. Negotiations were, therefore,

[1] Holinshed. [2] Lappenberg.

entered into for the marriage of his youngest sister Edilda.

Adulf of Flanders, grandson of King Alfred, through his daughter Elswitha, and nephew of Athelstan, conducted the embassy, and in the name of Hugh, brought over an immense number of precious gifts, which he displayed before the nobles at Abingdon.

These presents consisted of Oriental spices, hitherto unknown in England, brilliant gems, especially emeralds, many fleet horses, and other gifts worthy of being more especially described.[1] Amongst them, "a vase composed of onyx, and sculptured with such a subtle artistic hand, that as it was looked upon, the harvest-field pourtrayed upon it seemed to incline in waving bends upon its surface, the vines to bud forth, as if with a rich germinating juice, and its engraven men to move, as if endowed with life; whilst its shining and polished surface reflected, as if it were a mirror, he mimic face and form of the beholder." Another present was "the sword of Constantine the Great, bearing the name of that Emperor, inscribed in letters of gold; while upon its pommel, rising up above the rich plates of gold, was to be seen one of the four nails used in the crucifixion." This valuable gift was accompanied with the lance of Charlemagne, used in his wars against the Saracens, and the famous pennon which had belonged to that Emperor, by whom it was displayed in his war in Spain. "A diadem, rich with thick gold and precious jewels, the lustre of which dazzled the eyes of the beholders." A particle of the true cross, enclosed in crystal, and of the crown of thorns, encased in a similar manner, were also among the offerings of the princely suitor.

[1] William of Malmesbury.

Athelstan received the bearers of these treasures with great courtesy, and having accepted the proposal of Hugh for the Princess his sister, directed that the holy cross and sacred crown should be deposited in the Abbey of Malmesbury.[1]

Edilda, said to have been the most beautiful of all the sisters, was united to Hugh the Great, A.D. 926: this was a tie which doubly united the nations of France and England, and entailed singular consequences; for when Charles the Simple died, A.D. 929, at the castle of Peronne, two competitors alone remained for the French crown, the Count de Vermandois and Hugh the Great.

At this time, the abilities of Edilda's sister, the exiled Queen Edgifa, were once more called into action. She resolved to make one more effort in behalf of her child, in whom she hoped to see the royal line restored. She applied to William, Duke of Normandy, a generous prince, allied by blood to the royal family of France, and who saw in the enterprise much advantage to be gained to himself. The Duke, by his credit with the French nobles, engaged them to recal Louis. The French, either from love to their ancient masters, or fearing the troubles which the competition of Herbert and Hugh would cause, sent deputies to England, to bring back the son of Edgifa. This princess, rendered cautious by experience, hesitated before delivering the young Louis into the hands of the deputies, at the head of whom was William, Archbishop of Sens. She exacted from him, in his own name, and that of the nobles and the nation, not only hostages, but a promise to be more faithful to him than they had been to

[1] William of Malmesbury.

Charles the Simple: the conditions were accepted, and the Princess gave up her son, nor had she cause to repent it. Edgifa herself accompanied him in triumph to Boulogne, where, on their arrival, they were met by Hugh the Great and other French nobles, who united in taking the oath of fealty to him, and received him with every demonstration of joy, while the people sincerely rejoiced in the return of their sovereign. The sincerity of the nobles at this juncture is, however, questionable; for Edgifa is said to have returned to England, to obtain succours from her brother, King Athelstan, and herself heading the forces, a complete revolution was effected; Louis was triumphantly placed upon the throne, and peace restored to the kingdom. The spectacle was thus afforded of the grand-daughter of the Great Alfred heroically emulating her ancestor, by leading an army composed of English and French indifferently. Louis, only seventeen years of age, was proclaimed King at Boulogne, and afterwards conducted to Laon to be crowned, which ceremony was performed on the 20th of June, A.D. 936, by Artold, Archbishop of Rheims, in presence of more than twenty bishops, Hugh the Great, and the rest of the nobility of France. There is no reason to doubt that both the widowed Queen of Charles, and her sister Edilda, the wife of Hugh, were present at this triumphant ending of long disappointments. The coronation was rendered still more interesting by the marriage, at the same time, of Louis to his young cousin Gerberga, daughter of the Emperor Otho.[1]

Edgifa, finding the nobles sought to govern in

[1] De Menin's Treatise on the Anointing and Coronation of the Kings and Queens of France.

her son's name, and that, fearing she might obtain the regency, they were opposed to her residing in France, retired into England, where she remained at Athelstan's court till 938, when Louis, who resided at Laon, sent for her to assist him with her advice. She therefore returned to the court of Louis d'Outremer,—for so was he called from his sojourn in England. In France, however, Edgifa became involved in a new series of troubles, from her too open friendship with the House of Vermandois, always odious and displeasing to the reigning family. With singular imprudence, she allowed herself to become attached to Herbert,[1] the second son of that Count of Vermandois who had made her husband his prisoner at Peronne, where he died.

So offended and jealous was Louis at his mother's conduct, that he caused her residence at Laon to resemble a sort of honourable imprisonment. At last she contrived to escape from her guardians there, and some time after, although she had attained a mature age, married her youthful lover Herbert, then only twenty, at St. Quentin, for which act her son dispossessed her of the royal revenues she had so long enjoyed.[2] The following year, Edgifa gave birth to a son, Stephen of Troyes, but died in 953, in her confinement with a daughter, the Princess Agnes of Lorraine. Such was the fate of the sister of Athelstan, her son's policy inducing so much harshness to a mother to whom he owed his crown, his early safety, and careful education.

Lothaire, the grandson of Edgifa by Louis d'Outremer and Gerberga, succeeded his father at the end of a long

[1] Historic Anecdotes.

[2] Rivalité de la France et de l'Angleterre.

reign of thirty-eight years, and was followed by another son of his own, Louis the Fifth, the last of the Carlovingian race; but during the reigns of these three nominal kings, the real power was held by Hugh the Great, who had married Edilda, and afterwards by their son, Hugh Capet, who, on the death of Louis the Fifth, seized the crown, A.D. 987, being the first sovereign of that royal house whose late misfortunes resemble those of the Stuarts. From Hugh Capet, was lineally descended Eleanor de Montfort, the wife of Llewelyn, the last of the Welsh Princes, from whom Henry VII claimed his maternal descent.

The widowed Edgifa, Queen of Edward the Elder, during all these changes of fortune, was still unable to establish her claim to her patrimonial inheritance. After her husband died, the dispute was renewed, as we learn from the statement in the Queen's will, to which we return, as it runs through the web of this complicated history: "Then King Edward died, and Athelstan came to the throne. Then Goda, availing himself of the opportunity, went to King Athelstan, and besought him to require of Edgifa the restoration of his deeds, which he did; and she restored him all, except the deeds of Osterland; and he with his own hand released to her that paper (or deed), and humbly gave her thanks for the rest, and moreover he gave her his oath that the compact should stand good to her children, born and unborn, for ever. And this was done in the sight of Athelstan and of his nobles, at ——, near Lewes. And Edgifa held the land and deeds during the lives of his two sons, who succeeded him."[1]

On the death of Athelstan, after a sixteen years' reign,

[1] Lives of the Saints.

A.D. 941, the Queen of Edward the Elder had the satisfaction of beholding her eldest son Edmund raised to the throne, who had obtained the surname of "the Pious." The new monarch was then in the twentieth year of his age,[1] having been only four years old at the time his father died. The coronation took place at Kingston; and the same year, 941, Edmund was united to Elfgiva, by whom he became father of Edwy and Edgar, who afterwards sat on the throne. The birth of this last prince, in 943, took place at a vill close by Glastonbury, which from that circumstance derived the name Edgarlei, which it still retains. At the time Prince Edgar was born, St. Dunstan is said to have heard voices which seemed high up in the air, and which sounded as if intoning a psalm and giving utterance to these words: "Peace shall prevail amid the Church of the English during the time of the boy who has been born, and of our Dunstan."[2]

Glastonbury was especially favoured by Edmund. It is said that one day, when the King was out hunting, he set forward with his dogs in advance of his suite in the pursuit of a herd of deer which had been roused by their horns, and that stag and hounds, reaching a steep precipice, plunged into the abyss and were dashed to pieces; the King, eager in the chace, dashed after them so furiously that he was unable to check his horse, and on the moment when death stared him in the face, he uttered a mental prayer that if he could be saved, St. Dunstan, whom alone of all people living he had injured, should receive ample compensation. The horse arrived on the very edge of the precipice, stopped suddenly,[3]

[1] Turner says eighteen: Antiquities of Glastonbury.
[2] Flor. Wigorn. [3] Ibid.

and the King's life was saved, as he believed, by the intercession of the holy man. Returned home, Edmund sent for Dunstan, and commanded him to ride with him to Glastonbury. There, having first offered up his prayers, Edmund took Dunstan by the right hand and led him to the sacerdotal throne, on which he placed him with these words:—"Be thou the Prince in this place, its potent possessor, and the most faithful abbot of this church; and whatsoever may be here wanting to thee, either for the advancement and increase of divine worship, or for the sustentation and administration of the sacred monastic rule, I will, with a devout heart and royal munificence, supply thee." Dunstan accordingly laid the foundation of a glorious church, and as soon as the building was completed, assembled in it a company of monks. Edmund bestowed a charter of privilege on the abbey, A.D. 944. This charter was inscribed in golden letters in a copy of the Evangelists, presented by Edmund to the church, a beautiful illustration of Saxon art. In the charter, after the King had signed his own name, the following persons attested the deed, Eadred, the King's brother, and Edgifa, his mother, in these words: "I, Edgifa, mother of the King, have confirmed the aforesaid gift."[1]

As the signature of the King's wife is not there, this grant probably took place after the decease of that most excellent woman, whose remains were interred at Shipton, or, Shaftesbury,[2] and she became venerated as a

[1] Hearne Monasticon, vol. i.; Warner.

[2] The Monastery of Shaftesbury is said to have been built by Elfgiva, Queen of Edmund, in conjunction with her son Edgar, for nuns, and at her death she was not only interred there, but miracles are said to have been afterwards wrought at her tomb. Shaftesbury, once a village, but now a city, was built on the declivity of a hill, and a stone, transferred from an old wall to the chapter-house of the

saint for her many virtues. Her solicitude for the relief of the indigent, and charity in procuring the liberty of slaves, are particularly noticed by our monkish chroniclers, whose pages are filled with testimonials to her goodness. Of her, William of Malmesbury declares: "She was a woman always intent on good works, endowed with such piety and sweetness, as privately to redeem prisoners, and readily to bestow on the poor even her most precious garments. This Queen is said to have been remarkable for the beauty of her person, and so skilful, and admirable in the works wrought by her hands, according to the fashion of her times, that even envy itself, finding no fault, was compelled to praise. Malmesbury assures us that St. Elfgifa was not only eminent for her virtues during life, but for her miracles after death. He declares that she was favoured with the gift of prophecy, and in his work entitled "De Gestis Pontificium" may be seen an account of the miracles of this Queen, originally in metre, but written there in prose, and according to the author's own statement, when "he was young," before A.D. 1125.[1]

monastery, had this inscription:—"In the year of our Lord's incarnation, 880, King Alfred, in the eighth year of his reign, founded this city." Some say that Elfgiva did not die till 971 or 972, and that in the last of these dates she attested a charter to Glastonbury. In the days of Malmesbury and Ethelwerd miracles were still worked at the tomb of St. Elfgiva. "She was much afflicted by her wicked son Edwy, but comforted by his brother Edgar. God was pleased, for some years before her death, to try her with long and tedious illnesses, with which she was purified like gold in the furnace, and fitted for the heavenly palaces, to which she was called A.D. 971. Her festival is celebrated on the 18th of May, according to Britannia Sancta, which calls her the mother of Edwy and Edgar."

[1] William of Malmesbury, Miraculæ S. Elfgifæ.

One of these miracles is thus given, but as it concerns Edgar, her youngest son, who could have been only an infant, either the good Queen must have survived the date usually assigned as that of her death, for many years, or else it must have been performed by her step-mother, Queen Edgifa. The widow of Edward the Elder was so popular with the English, that many of the subsequent Queens of England, till Emma of Normandy, who died shortly before the Conquest, assumed hers as a sort of surname in addition to their own; thus Emma was called Emma Elfgiva,[1] or the "Help-Giver." The legend stands thus:—

Edgar one day, out hunting, pursued the chase to the extremity of the forest, and alighting there to await his friends, threw himself on the ground beneath the shade of a wild apple-tree beside a stream, where he fell asleep. A female hound, apparently large with whelp, came to rest at the monarch's feet, and aroused the sleeper. The hound was mute, but the whelps within barked as if for joy. The surprised King, raising his eyes, beheld two apples successively fall into the stream, which in doing so caused a sound to be emitted from the splashing bubbles of the disturbed waters, resembling the words, "Well is thee! well is thee!"[2] Shortly after the King perceived a small empty pitcher, followed by a large one filled with water, floating down the stream, and as if the waters were like to a whirlpool, the larger strove to empty its contents into the smaller one, but without success, for it escaped empty from every such attempt, though it dashed saucily against the side of the larger vessel.

[1] It will have been observed that the letters *f* and *v* are used indifferently in Saxon.

[2] "Wel his the."

On Edgar's return, he sought his mother, to whom he knew God had revealed many things, and desired the meaning of what he had seen. The Queen directed her son to tranquillize his mind, and having delayed her reply till the following morning, addressed her son in these words:—

"The barking of the whelps, while the mother was quiescent, signifies that those who are now in power and doing well (though evil-disposed), will remain silent; but that, after thy death, worthless, wicked, debauched spendthrifts, as yet unborn, will be found to arise and bark against God's Church.

"As to the one apple falling in quick succession after the other, so that from their collision as they fell a sound was emitted, which seemed to convey the words, 'Well is thee,' this signifies, that from thee, who are now as a tree shading all England, shall issue two sons; and those who favour the pretensions of the second shall destroy the first, and then the promoters of their opposing parties shall say of each of the young Princes, 'Well is thee,' because he who is dead shall be reigning in heaven, and he who is living shall be reigning in this world.

"Then as to the larger pitcher not being able to fill up the smaller with its contents, that is intended to designate the nations of the Northmen, which are more numerous than the English, and who will, after thy death, attack England; and although they will make many attempts to supply the losses suffered in their ranks, by fresh accessions of their compatriots, shall never be able to fill up with their soldiers this corner of the world. On the contrary, our Angles, even when they seem to be most completely subdued, will have vigour

and strength enough to expel them, and the land shall be theirs, as it is in accordance with the will of God, and so shall remain until the time pre-appointed by Christ."[1]

Edmund married a second wife, as we learn from the Saxon Chronicle, who survived him; this second consort was Elfleda of Damerham, daughter of Ealderman Elgar,[2] who adopted the name of Edgifa, in consequence of which circumstance great confusion occurs, in the Chronicles attributing to one Queen the acts of the other, so that it is difficult to distinguish them.

When only in his twenty-fifth year, A.D. 946, the young monarch Edmund was slain by a robber, named Leof, at Puckle-kirk, in Gloucestershire,[3] on the occasion of his celebrating the mass day of St. Augustine, which was customary with the Saxons.

Edmund had formerly enacted some severe laws against thieves, and pecuniary punishments proving inefficient, had commanded that the oldest in every gang should suffer the extreme penalty of death.[4] This was the first time that the life of man had been taken for theft, and it cost Edmund his own.

Leof was a notorious robber, banished for his crimes. He suddenly presented himself to the King, forcing his way into the palace, whence Edmund indignantly ordered him to be expelled; he fiercely resisted the cup-bearer, to whom the order was given, and who endeavoured to obey the royal mandate. On this, the exasperated monarch rushed on Leof and seized him by the hair, when the robber drew his dagger and

[1] William of Malmesbury; Gest. Pont. Ang.
[2] Saxon Chronicle. [3] Ibid. [4] Rapin.

stabbed the youthful prince to the heart. Edmund did not die instantly, but the wound in his breast proved mortal. The assassin was despatched forthwith by the royal attendants.[1]

Edmund the Pious, after a short reign of six years,[2] thus died in 946, leaving his two children so young, that in a council held to settle the succession, they were adjudged unfit to reign, and the crown awarded to their uncle Edred.

It was in the reign of Edmund, the son of the sainted Edgifa, that the celebrated Reay Cross, or Ray Cross, was placed on Stanmore, on the confines of Westmoreland and Yorkshire, bearing upon it the *arms of England and Scotland sculptured on the opposite sides.* It was erected in testimony of Edmund's grant of Cumberland (which district he had obtained by the conquest of Dunmaile, its King) to Malcolm, King of Scots, on the condition that Malcolm should hold it of him, and protect the northern parts of England by sea and land against hostile incursions. From this circumstance the eldest sons of the Scottish monarchs from that time were styled "Governors of Cumberland,"[3] and the Cross was placed as a memorial of the divisions of the two kingdoms.

Queen Edgifa is frequently noticed during the reign of her younger son Edred. Having heard that St. Ethelwold, Abbot of Glastonbury, had resolved to go to France to study the Holy Scriptures, the Queen, considering the Prelate's absence would be no small loss to the kingdom, prevailed upon her son to stay his journey, and make him Abbot of Abingdon in Berkshire. She

[1] Hume, Raleigh, Lingard. [2] Britton and Brayley.
[3] Camden's Britannia, 1594.

assured Edred that Ethelwold had not only wisdom enough to suffice for himself, but to guide others, and that he needed not to seek in foreign lands for what he possessed already, and she begged him not to let so great a man depart the country; the King was delighted to hear this assurance from his mother, and acted on her suggestion.[1] It was Edred who, in the latter part of his reign, repaired the Abbey of Abingdon, which had been built by King Ina, but had fallen to decay and ruin.[2] In this great undertaking the Abbot and monks were assisted by grants of money from the royal treasures, and the most material benefit was conferred upon them by the donations of the Queen-Mother.

Ethelwold, who by Edgifa's influence had been made Abbot of Abingdon, was afterwards made Bishop of Winchester.

At the time when Edred was endeavouring to persuade his friend and adviser Dunstan, Abbot of Glastonbury, to accept the see of Winchester, which he had declined, as being unfit for it, Edred entreated his mother, Queen Edgifa, to invite the prelate to dinner and add her persuasions. "I know," said the King, "dearest mother and Queen of the broad empire of the English, that our mutual friend Dunstan loves you the most of living beings, and that he takes an especial delight in the good works that you do; because, whatever he counsels you for the sake of eternal life to perform, that you are sure willingly to accomplish, whether it be in giving alms for the subsistence of the poor, or in the bestowal of donations for the advancement of churches.[3] Therefore is it, that I have a confident hope

[1] Wolstan Vit. S. Ethelwold. [2] Magna Brit.
[3] Lives of the Saints.

that if you beseech him to do that which it is becoming in me to ask, and in him to perform, he cannot justly refuse a compliance with your request. It is a thing perfectly manifest to all persons, that he ought to hold the very highest rank in the priesthood. This is as plain to us as that we are his inferiors in wisdom, and in all that duly merits honour and respect in this life, as we are sure that he who is King of the English is a more powerful monarch than any of the other kings of the earth. Address him, then, with that winning eloquence which belongs to women: struggle, in order that the grace which you have obtained in his eyes, may gain from the servant of God a compliance which cannot but tend to aid in releasing us from the bonds of sin."

The Queen-Mother, in obedience to the words of her son, invited Dunstan to come to her, and sought, by her arguments, to induce him to relax in his resolution, but he remained unmoved. "I am unwilling," said he, "lady, that thou shouldst ask of me aught that it would hurt my conscientious feelings to concede, or the refusal to concede which may give offence to thee. I am not ignorant how difficult it is for each of us to plead his cause before the tribunal of Christ, much less how difficult it will be for a man to obtain an acquittal in those cases in which he has acted as the adviser or the judge of others. If, however, these considerations cannot produce any impression upon thy mind, I would desire to add another, and such as may be esteemed that which mainly must prevent me from receiving a bishopric. I see that my lord, the King, suffers under a constant langour, that his life is endangered by it, that he cannot endure to be parted from me for a moment,

because he has made me as if the father of a sovereign, and the master of an entire kingdom."

As the Queen-Mother still persisted in urging him to accept the mitre, notwithstanding his repeated refusals, he, somewhat agitated, said to her "Most assuredly, the episcopal mitre shall never cover my brows in the days of this thy son."[1]

From this conversation Dunstan departed, with his mind much agitated. The next day, however, he informed the King that, after his interview with Edgifa, he had, on his return home, beheld a vision of St. Peter, who struck him, saying, "This is the punishment for your refusal, and a token to you not to decline hereafter the primacy of England." The King, not perceiving his friend's artifice, who desired to be all or none, interpreted the vision to his own mind, asserting that it foretold he was to be Archbishop of Canterbury.[2]

In 955, the death of Edred deprived Edgifa of her son, and Dunstan of a firm friend. His nephew Edwy, eldest son of Edmund, succeeded him, a prince then in his sixteenth year. He not only manifested an open antipathy to the clergy, but deprived many prelates of their benefices, and even went so far as to banish Dunstan from the kingdom. These measures gave great umbrage to the people; but they were still more displeased, and loudly and vehemently did they express their indignation, when they beheld the manner in which Edwy treated his aged grandmother, the venerable Queen Edgifa. Upon some unknown pretext, she was despoiled of all she possessed, and reduced to a state of indigence and privacy.[3] Eadmer, writing of the injuries

[1] Osbern, Vit. St. Dunstan; Acta Sancta; Aug. Sacra.
[2] Turner's Anglo-Saxons. [3] Lingard.

Edwy inflicted on his grandmother, says, "He afflicted immensely *his mother, the glory of all England, the consoler of churches, and the supporter of the oppressed,* and after having taken away from her the property belonging to her, cruelly and barbarously degraded her from her previous dignity." For this ill-treatment no other cause is apparent than the favour with which the Queen had always regarded the clergy.

As regards her patrimonial estate, we find that the Queen's own Charter runs thus:—"At length Edred died, and Edgifa was despoiled of her whole inheritance. When Leofric and Leofstan, the two sons of Goda, seized from Edgifa the two aforesaid lands at Cowling and at Osterland, and said to the young Edwy, who had then been elected, that they were more rightfully theirs than hers. And so it was settled until Edgar." The reign of the oppressor was, however, prematurely brought to a close. The people rebelled against Edwy, and placed his brother Edgar, a boy of twelve years of age, on the throne, which caused Edwy to die of grief soon after.

Edgar was no sooner made king than he annulled all the oppressive acts of the preceding government. Attention was forthwith paid to the injuries of Edgifa, who now recovered her often-disputed patrimony.[1] The Queen's Charter says of King Edgar, that "he and his nobles decreed that they (viz. Leofric and Leofstan, the sons of Goda) had committed a wicked robbery, and they decreed the inheritance to be hers, and had it restored. Then Edgifa received by the King's permission, and in presence of him and all his bishops, the said deeds, and laying her hand on the altar, gave the land to the Church of Christ, viz., to the convent (of Christ's Church at Canterbury), and for the quiet of her soul;

[1] Lingard.

and denounced that Christ, with the whole assembly of heaven, would bring evil on him for ever, who should at any time pervert or make void this bequest. Thus this inheritance came to the convent of the Church of Christ." No doubt the harassed Queen saw that this was the only plan of securing the property, as the Church would guard its own.

Appended to an antique picture of Queen Edgifa are the following lines commemorative of her donations to the Church; in it her name is written, as is sometimes the case in our old authors, Eddeva or Edyve:—

> "Edyve, the good queene and noble mother
> To Ethelstane, Edmund, and Eldred,
> Kinges of England, every each after other,
> To Christ's Church of Canterbury did give indeed,
> Monketon and Thorndenn, the monkes there to feede;
> Meyham, Cleeue, Cowlinge, Osterland,
> East Farleugh, and Lenham, as we beeleve;
> The yeare Dom. MLXI. of Christ's incarnation."

In the subscriptions of King Edgar's Charter of Privilege to Hyde Abbey, by Winchester, which is yet remaining in the valuable library of Sir Robert Cotton, are contained also the signatures of Elfrida, that monarch's queen, and Edgifa, his aged grandmother. They are written in letters of gold, in a hand of that age: "Ego Edgifu, prædicti regis avia hoc opus egregiam crucis taumate consolidavi." Selden observes that Edgifa durst not style herself any other than "the king's grandmother," on account of the law passed in Wessex through the crimes of Eadburga; for so "avia," as well as "avea," denoted, of which many instances in those times are on record.

Edgifa died August 25th, A.D. 963.[1]

[1] Notes to Lye's Saxon Dictionary, whence the Queen's will has been extracted.

ETHELGIVA,

QUEEN OF EDWY THE FAIR.

CONTENTS.

Ethelgiva's relationship to the young Prince Edwy the Fair—Her extreme beauty—St. Dunstan's character and history—His contentions with the Devil; his temptations and triumphs—The fame of the Saint—St. Dunstan's mortification to find the young King married—The forced coronation—Flight of the King—Anger of the Nobles—Rage of the Bishops—Discovery of the weeping Bride—Insults to Edwy and Ethelgiva—Passionate words of the Mother of the young Queen—Fury of Dunstan—Sympathy of the People for the Royal Pair—Ethelgiva refused the title of Queen.—Edwy's dislike to the ambitious Prelate—The evil spirit at Glastonbury—Flight of Dunstan—His dangers from his enemies, the married priests—Security of the Royal Lovers—Seizure of Ethelgiva: horrible vengeance—She is sent to Ireland—Odo's representations to the King—His despair—His troubles—His brother Edgar—Recall of Dunstan—Divorce pronounced against Ethelgiva—Excommunication of Edwy—Recovery of Ethelgiva, and attempt to return—Waylaid on her journey—Hamstrung and starved to death—Broken heart of Edwy—He dies—Buried at Winchester.

The history of Ethelgiva's life is a sad episode, and presents a picture of crime, cruelty, and bigotry rarely equalled in the annals of any country. She must have been of royal blood, as she is said to be so nearly allied

to her husband that the fact furnished a pretext for the injuries inflicted upon her by her ruthless enemies. No narrative can more strongly illustrate the extraordinary power of the Church, and the persistance of its servants, than the tale of Edwy's persecuted wife. She is represented as so remarkably beautiful, that Edwy, prior to his accession, had been unable to resist the fascination of her charms, and is supposed to have married her in secret. On this step all the after-misfortunes of the enamoured pair seem to have depended. The monkish writers who have told her story are generally desirous to avert blame from St. Dunstan, through whom the misfortunes of Ethelgiva arose, and it is their object to prove that no marriage whatever took place between the lovers; that Ethelgiva, her mother, was of infamous character, and that the conduct of Prince Edwy was worthy of all reprehension. That there was imprudence in the connection there can be no doubt, and it is possible that they might have been within the forbidden degrees of relationship; but nothing could excuse the extreme and persevering cruelty with which their fault, admitting it to have existed, was punished by the severe and haughty churchman whose will was resisted by the young King.

Perhaps the bitterness of St. Dunstan to the unfortunate pair may be better understood when the circumstances of his own life are considered. The tender feelings he had once himself experienced might have been expected to cause him to look with indulgence on the natural weakness of youth; instead of which the memory of his sacrifices seems to have rendered him fiercely severe and implacable in his resolution to root out every tendency to yield to the impulses of passion

or affection. Whatever the failings of Edwy might be—and his subsequent conduct showed that he had many—the severity of St. Dunstan may be looked upon as having fostered instead of correcting them.

Dunstan was born of a noble Saxon family, at the beginning of the reign of Athelstan.[1] His precocious talents induced his parents to send him for instruction to a famous school at Glastonbury, where his remarkable genius soon developed itself. His bodily health was infirm, but his mental powers were extraordinary. Not only in abstruse learning was he soon distinguished, but in all the lighter literature, such as "heroic poetry, songs and ballads," which was then highly prized. His influential friend Wulfhelm, Archbishop of Canterbury, introduced him at the court of Athelstan; but his haughty and contemptuous bearing, as well as his superiority, gained him more enemies than friends, and the absurd charge of magic was brought forward against him by the jealous ignorance which could not comprehend his amazing information. He was waylaid and attacked by enemies, by whom he was maltreated and left for dead, having been cast into a bog. From this, however, he escaped, was received by a relative, the Bishop of Winchester, and counselled by him to devote himself to a monastic life.

But the world still had charms for the accomplished Dunstan, and he next appears living altogether in the society of, and protected by, a rich matron of royal descent, named Ethelflaed, cultivating the arts of music, painting, and sculpture, in all of which he excelled;[2] his

[1] Turner, Vita S. Dunstani.

[2] Bridferth, Osbern, &c. In Hickes there is an engraving from one of St. Dunstan's drawings, representing the Saviour.

works in metal, such as bells, crucifixes, and censers, were of admirable execution. His fame continued to increase, and reports of miracles performed by him became current. King Athelstan and his court came to visit Ethelflaed and her celebrated guest, and showed him great honour. A miracle he then performed was bruited abroad; it was asserted, that through his power, no sooner had the royal cupbearers poured out the mead from their vessels than they found them instantly filled anew.

At this time, it seems, the heart of the learned Dunstan became the prey of beauty, and he passionately loved a fair maiden from whom Wulfhelm, the Bishop of Canterbury, was anxious to separate him. His reason appears to have been disturbed by the struggles of his mind on this occasion, for his resistance to advice and entreaty was long and resolute. At length the Bishop had recourse to prayer, and implored Heaven that some worldly misfortune might cause him to see the path of duty with more clearness. The evil prayed for arrived, perhaps either in the death or infidelity of her he loved. Dunstan was seized with a dangerous fever, on recovering from which he had no longer any opposition to make to the proposal of his zealous relative; and, considering himself called to the holy state, he embraced a monastic life at Glastonbury. Here he began a career of austerity before unparalleled;[1] he built himself a cell too short to allow him to lie at length, and here he wrought at his forge, when not engaged in prayer: he slept little, and his food was almost too scanty to sustain nature. He believed that the Foul Fiend was always on the watch to surprise him, and he thought it necessary

[1] Lappenberg.

to be constantly on his guard against his attempts. Too much learning had no doubt made him mad, and, fostered by his solitude, the malady became confirmed. All was, however, by his admiring and bigoted brethren imputed to him for holiness, and their wonder was daily fed by the miraculous tales they heard of devilish forms visiting the cell of Dunstan, and contending with that pious and holy recluse. The Fiend would sometimes thrust his head in at door or window, and insult his ears with profane and foul language. Once the Father of Ill ventured too far, and Dunstan, appearing not to observe him, waited until his tongs were red hot, when suddenly darting forward, he seized the tempter by the nose, who yelled so loud that the hideous noise was heard throughout the whole country.

The solution of this mystery probably is, that the ignorant monks were alarmed at the noise made by the fire in his furnaces, as he prepared the metals on which he wrought.

Every year the fame of Dunstan increased till, at length, he was drawn from his retreat, and took up his permanent place at court as chief minister to King Edmund, having been previously made Abbot of Glastonbury, with an enormous revenue. His influence from this time knew no bounds, and his will was paramount in all things. When young Edwy, therefore, came to the crown, it was not likely that he would allow his power to be disputed, or surprising that he should desire to sweep from his path those who dared to oppose him. Of course, when so young a man as Edwy held supreme power, Dunstan expected to have still more authority, and nothing could exceed his anger when he found himself thwarted on the very threshold by the

discovery of the King's marriage without his sanction. His representations, that Edwy should separate from Ethelgiva, were unattended to, and nothing but murmurs attended his command that she should not be admitted to a share in the solemnity of the coronation.

The ceremony was performed at Kingston, on a raised platform, in sight of all the people, Archbishop Odo officiating on the occasion. Edwy was remarkable for his handsome person, from which he was called The Fair, and was at the time only in his seventeenth year, a circumstance which might have called for leniency. A magnificent banquet, befitting such an occasion, had been prepared for Edwy and the Saxon nobles; but while the latter were indulging in the rude and noisy merriment accompanying such entertainments, Edwy, watching his opportunity, escaped to society more congenial to his taste, perhaps rejoicing to be able thus to avoid the excessive drinking which was certain to form a feature at these festivals. The Saxon nobles, however, perceiving his absence, were indignant at their entertainer showing them so little courtesy, and loudly expressed the displeasure they felt at the young King's forgetfulness of their dignity.[1] St. Dunstan and the prelate Kynsey were appointed by them "*to bring the King back to the festive board.*" These two ecclesiastics, equally offended with the Saxon nobles, accepted the mission, and angrily leaving the scene of festivity, with a suspicion of the cause of Edwy's absence, not a little irritated and incensed by the disrespect shown to themselves as representatives of the Church, in common with the other guests, but more especially from his

[1] Saxon Chronicle.

acting thus against their known and expressed disapproval of the alliance into which Edwy had entered,—sought the retreat of the imprudent host.

Entirely throwing aside all respect or consideration, the two prelates burst into the apartment of the King, whom they found, as they had expected, in the company of his young wife and her mother. The King, forgetting in the happiness of the moment all but his escape from an irksome ceremony, had taken off and laid on one side the crown of state, that crown which he had not yet been able to share with the woman whom he loved, and was caressing Ethelgiva with fondness, and soothing her mortification at not partaking in the splendour he did not prize alone,—when these rude intruders invaded his privacy.

A most strange and unbecoming scene ensued. With violent language they insisted on the King's returning to the banquet, loading Ethelgiva and her mother with the bitterest threats and reproaches, and heaping on them the most insulting and opprobrious epithets; and then, resolving to accomplish their purpose, forcibly replaced the diadem on the head of Edwy, whom they dragged from his seat, and literally compelled to return with them to the revellers in the banqueting-hall.[1] This was no easy task; for the terrified women clung to him as to their protector, and force only constrained them to separate from him.

At this moment Ethelgiva, the mother of the young wife, turning her eyes on Dunstan, exclaimed in a burst of anger, "How unmeasurable must be the audacity of this man, who has thus ventured to intrude himself upon the privacy of a King! You have threatened

[1] Malmesbury, Wallingford, &c.

me with death by strangulation, but I shall have you doomed to the mutilation of your limbs, and to perpetual banishment."[1]

These passionate words were fatal. Dunstan, enraged at the resistance and the confidence displayed, saw plainly that both the mother and daughter had obtained an influence over the heart of the young Edwy, which the monk had intended to appropriate; and as the elder was the most likely to bias the King in favour of her own views, Dunstan's rage seems to have been peculiarly directed, at this time, against her. It is thought that Dunstan was really ignorant of Edwy's actual marriage to the daughter of Ethelgiva, which may palliate in some degree the violence of his conduct, anxious as he was to prevent the union. On the other hand, the existence of such a tie, and the circumstance of Ethelgiva been denied the usual honours of Queen-Consort, may excuse the ambitious and indignant mother the fury of her resentment. We are told by some chroniclers that he was not married, and that on the coronation-day Ethelgiva and her mother visited Edwy, it being the object of the latter to persuade the King to marry "*one or the other* of them;"[2] but she probably desired him to proclaim his union to his subjects, and thus, without further delay, enable her daughter to wear the crown.[3] Edwy might have been too

[1] Osbern. [2] Bridferth, Osbern, and Eadmer.

[3] Those writers who assert that Ethelgiva was not lawfully united to Edwy are supported by several modern authors of the Roman Catholic persuasion, as Dr. Lingard, Dr. Milner, &c. Hallam blames Dr. Henry for calling her Queen and a lawful wife, without intimating that the nature of her tie with Edwy was at the least considered equivocal. Dr. Lingard divides the writers on Ethelgiva's history into two classes—those who wrote before, and those who

much in dread of the ecclesiastical authorities to disclose the important fact, and hence his anxiety to pacify both his wife and her mother. The powerful individuals who headed the combination against Edwy's marriage, on finding the tie really did exist, and that it was impossible to be prevented, directed their fury against both the young Queen and her mother, vilifying them in the most atrocious manner.

The conduct of Dunstan meanwhile, instead of producing the results he expected, enlisted sympathy for Edwy and his Queen, and the ancient enemies of the proud Abbot were not slow to take advantage of the occasion. Ethelgiva was accepted as the wife of the sovereign, and the star of the prelate declined. Availing herself of Edwy's unconcealed dislike of Dunstan, the young and injured Queen hastened to take revenge, and, by his consent, constituted herself mistress not only of all the property and title-deeds belonging to the community of Glastonbury, but of the personal property of Dunstan also; and, at the same time, a decree of instant banishment was issued against him by the King, upon

wrote after the Conquest. Of the first were Bridferth of Romsey, who is followed by Osbern and Eadmer. Neither of these last had, it appears, seen an ancient Life of Odo, written in Anglo-Saxon, Cott. MSS., in British Museum (Nero E. 1 *b.*), which has formed the groundwork of the later Lives of that prelate, and is another authority quoted by Dr. Lingard. A second Life of Odo is another source, of which the author, supposed to be either Eadmer or Osbern, is doubtful: it describes the coronation scene from Bridferth, and then turns to the ancient Life of Odo, the words of which it seems almost to adopt. The additions in this seem like an attempt to reconcile the narrative in the Life of Odo with the account of Osbern, as if the pages of both the latter were open before the writer at the time the MS. was written. Malmesbury wrote the story of Ethelgiva twenty or thirty years later.

charges from which he was unable to clear himself. The monkish chronicler proceeds to state, that at the time the persons sent to drive the brethren from their monastery were superintending the inventory of the ecclesiastical goods and property subjected to confiscation, there was heard, on the western side of the church, the harsh, ringing laugh of a demon, "which sounded like the wheezy voice of a gleesome hag." It was heard by St. Dunstan himself, and he responded to it in these words: "Foe to mankind, do not rejoice so much; for however great may be thy joy now in seeing my departure, thy grief will be twice as great when God, to thy confusion, shall permit my return." Dunstan saw no safety, for the present, but in flight; but scarcely had the vessel proceeded three miles from land, being bound for Flanders, where the exiled monk meant to take refuge, when the emissaries of Queen Ethelgiva's mother appeared on the beach, resolved on the destruction of Dunstan, had he remained but a few moments more on shore.

Another abbot was chosen amongst the enemies of Dunstan, Elsy being appointed to Glastonbury, and the abbey was filled with *married* priests,—a state which he had resolutely extirpated amongst the clergy, its former community being all displaced. The downfall of Dunstan took place in 956, and was followed by that of other members of the Church, who, despoiled of their property, were driven into banishment.

The reaction of so great a triumph appears to have been too great for the mind of the youthful monarch, who now, surrounding himself with evil counsellors, and feeling his power unlimited, gave way to excesses, which, perhaps, but for the imprudent and injudicious fury of

Dunstan, might never have been either in his wish or his reach. Rapacious favourites, young like himself, inexperienced and unprincipled, urged him to the most dangerous and impolitic acts. He despoiled monasteries, and seized possessions, making powerful enemies on all sides; but his chief crime was his conduct to his venerable grandmother, Edgifa, whom he deprived of all her possessions, as has been before related in her life.

The King's marriage had been *legal*[1] as far as the actual ceremony, but it was contrary to Church laws, Edwy and his wife being too nearly related, or "too sib," as the Chronicle has it; and, consequently, as the Church would not recognise their union, an open war ensued between Church and State, the successive contests of which occupy the whole of this short and troubled reign.

Carried away by the stream of success, neither Edwy nor Ethelgiva allowed themselves to fear, and held their former enemies in contempt; but the unrestrained license of the court, and the indulgence shown to profligate and exacting ministers, soon disgusted the country, and new troubles began. Odo, Archbishop of Canterbury, conducted the party of Dunstan, who, though in exile at Ghent, was far from having abandoned the hope

[1] The Charter, Cod. Dipl. No. 1201, which is in every respect an authentic document, mentions her as Ælfgyfa, the King's wife; and this in addition to herself was witnessed by her mother Ædelgyfa, by four bishops, and by three principal noblemen of the court. "If (says Mr Kemble*) that charter be not genuine, there is not one genuine in the whole Codex Diplomaticus, and I cannot see the shadow of a reason to question it, as Lingard has done."

* Kemble's Saxons in England.

of ultimate triumph. The discontented clergy fomented the disaffection everywhere ripe; a rebellion broke out in Mercia and in the north, and Prince Edgar was proclaimed King, although only thirteen years of age.

The ill-fated Ethelgiva was alone in her palace in Wessex, her husband, being forced to absent himself in consequence of these accumulating troubles, considered her in perfect safety; but Bishop Odo's emissaries were on the watch, and a strong party of his troops surprised the place, when the Queen was seized upon, dragged forth, and a hideous vengeance accomplished. Her beautiful face was seared by a red hot iron, and she was forced on board a vessel, which carried her off a prisoner to Ireland.

Odo, on this, immediately repaired to Edwy, and endeavoured to represent to him the necessity of yielding, doubtless concealing from him the extent of the punishment he had inflicted on the unfortunate Ethelgiva, which, however, he was not slow to learn, when his agony and rage may be conceived.

Mercia and Northumberland now rose to place Edgar on the throne, and Edwy, whom these events had forced to fly about from place to place, entered, at length, into an arrangement with his young brother, that the river Thames should form a boundary to divide their respective principalities. No sooner was this effected than Edgar, upheld by the priesthood, annulled all the acts which had been passed against them by Edwy, recalled Dunstan from his exile, and reinstated the Queen-Dowager in her former rank and dignity. It must have been a great triumph to the enemies of the ill-fated Ethelgiva, to behold Dunstan, on the death of Coenwalch, Bishop of Worcester, chosen his successor

in that see, and consecrated by Archbishop Odo. A still greater was afforded by the solemn sentence of divorce pronounced between the King and herself, by Odo, on the plea of their too near relationship.[1] The sentence was given by the Church A.D. 958.

The revengeful prelate had determined, at all costs, to uphold the canonical law of marriage, and his act proves how fully assured he was that violence or death alone could divide those who loved so tenderly as this ill-fated pair. Nor was this the last stroke of vindictive power exercised: Edwy himself underwent the sentence of excommunication,—a fact mentioned by Malmesbury alone, of all who have recorded the events of this most harshly-treated monarch's reign.

Some have supposed that it was the Queen's mother who was seared with the iron brand; but the object of the Archbishop was to destroy utterly that fatal beauty which had enslaved the King. The attempt was, however, fruitless: the effect of the searing-iron was in a few months entirely obliterated; and, restored to her former beauty, Ethelgiva, notwithstanding the sentence of perpetual exile issued against her, quitted Ireland, with the design of rejoining her beloved Edwy at Kingston. She was on her way thither when, at a short distance from Gloucester, she was intercepted by the spies of Odo, who once more obtained possession of their prisoner, retaining her until they could receive the orders of that prelate. Odo commanded that Ethelgiva should be tortured in the most horrible manner that could possibly be devised, and accordingly the frightful operation of hamstringing was put in force on her delicate limbs. This brutal sentence perpetrated,

[1] Saxon Chronicle.

the young and beautiful Queen was left, without food or attendance, to linger on a bed of straw, till, at the end of a few days, death, more merciful than her heartless persecutors, released her from her sufferings.[1]

Edwy, as unfortunate as his hapless consort, whose greatest crime seems to have been fidelity to the last, was not long destined to survive the loss of one so dearly loved. A series of afflictions pursued and overwhelmed him; rebellion—a younger brother preferred before him—his divorce and excommunication, together with the reversion of every decree made against his own enemies and those of Ethelgiva,—all combined, were too much for his mind to support. He sunk into a state of extreme melancholy, which, at the end of his stormy reign of four years, terminated his existence. The remains of the broken-hearted sovereign were interred at Winchester, the favourite city of the West-Saxon monarchs.

[1] Malmesbury.

ELFRIDA,

QUEEN OF EDGAR "THE PEACEABLE."

CONTENTS.

Edgar's volatile character—Wulfreda, the nun—Ethelflede the Fair, mother of Edward—Her death, and Elfrida's beauty—Ethelwold's mission—His deception, and marriage to Elfrida—Misrepresentation to the king—Ethelwold's son—Hunting—The tribute of wolves' heads—The concealed beauty—Ethelwold's confession to his wife—Her resolve—Her conquest—The murder in the forest—Marriage of Edgar and Elfrida—St. Dunstan—Elfrida's power—Contentions—Ventriloquism—Ely—Ordwulf, the giant—Dissolute clergy—Coronation at Bath—King Edgar's death—Edward the Martyr—His cruel murder—Ethelred's tears: the whipping with wax candles—Pledging—Miracles—Penitence of the Queen postponed—Saxon verses—Dunstan's anathema—Murder of Brithnoth, Abbot of Ely—Ethelred asserts his will—Elfrida returns to Warewell—Her religious edifices—Wulfreda ejected from Barking—Death of Elfrida—Royal grant to the convent.

THE severity of St. Dunstan, which had been so inveterate towards the unfortunate Edwy, relaxed singularly in regard to his successor Edgar, whose habits and propensities do not appear to have differed much

from those of the King, his brother, whom he superseded. But he was so young that time was before the ambitious churchman to mould him to his wishes, and to secure all that he desired for the good of the Church, and for the well-governing of the country; for Dunstan was a man of too intelligent a mind to sacrifice one to the other.

Many romantic tales are related in ballads and Saxon poems, of the volatile affections of the young King. He is accused of having carried off a nun, or at least a novice, from the Abbey of Wilton, where she was residing, and forcibly detaining her. This fair one is called Wulfreda,[1] and she became the mother of a daughter, who afterwards dedicated herself to a religious life; she having herself retired to the Monastery of Barking, founded by Edgar, in expiation of his act.

The first wife of Edgar is called Ethelflede the Fair, or the White; and sometimes also, for some unexplained reason, *the Duck*;[2] she was the mother of Prince Edward, who succeeded Edgar on the throne; but she died early, and it was soon afterwards that Elfrida became his wife.

The extraordinary beauty of the only daughter and heiress of the aged Ordgar, Ealdorman of Devonshire, made her hand the prize coveted by many a youthful Saxon noble; and such lively pictures of the young lady's beauty had reached the court of Edgar, that the heart of that monarch, apparently extremely susceptible, was set on fire by the reports. He instantly formed the design of securing to himself so great a treasure, and directed Ethelwold, his minister and friend, who was at most times his confidant and adviser, a noble

[1] Malmesbury, Brompton, Osbern. [2] Lappenberg.

whom "he much loved and trusted," to repair to the residence of Elfrida's father, and ascertain whether her beauty was indeed such as had been reported. The secret object of this mission was revealed to the courtier in these words: "Go to the noble Baron Ordgar of Devonshire, see if his daughter be as fair as men speken of; and if it be so, I will have her unto my wife."

Ethelwold obeyed;—he discovered that report had not exaggerated, but rather fallen short of the truth in its picture of the charming Elfrida, and so much was he enraptured with the young lady on their first interview, that, wholly forgetting his object in seeing her had been to advance the suit of another, and that other his sovereign, he earnestly desired to obtain the lovely heiress for himself. He accordingly, without betraying the real object of his visit, proposed to her father that a union should take place between himself and the lady; and Ordgar, who was not ignorant that the noble Ethelwold, besides being a fair young knight, worthy, and, moreover, "well with the King," was a man certain of his fortunes, being the favourite of his royal master, considered the proposal so advantageous, that he accorded his consent to the match, provided also that the King himself was agreeable to it,[1] a point which involved some difficulty to the lover of Elfrida.

Edgar had, in earliest infancy, been placed by his father, King Edmund, under the care of Alfwenna, a noble lady,[2] the mother of Ethelwold, who, in conse-

[1] Caxton's Chronicle.

[2] Lingard; Parkins's Norwich. The name Alf-wenna, signifying "Half-Queen," implies very high rank and power in its possessor.

quence, had, with three younger brothers, been the playmates in childhood, and trusty friends and companions in riper years, of their future sovereign: indeed, it was to the powerful influence of Athelstan, the husband of Alfwenna, an East Anglian nobleman, whose royal descent and extensive authority had procured for him the denomination of "Half-King," that Edgar was mainly indebted for his elevation to the throne of Northumberland and Mercia during his brother Edwy's lifetime, and subsequently, for the kingdom of all England. To testify his gratitude, Edgar erected East Anglia into an earldom, Athelstan being the first who enjoyed the title and authority of Earl over that district, an honour afterwards enjoyed by Ethelwold at his death.[1]

Knowing how high the suitor for his daughter's hand stood with the King, the Earldorman felt no doubts, when the Earl engaged to obtain the desired consent to his proposed nuptials with Elfrida: it was a task which required, under his circumstances, very nice management, yet he succeeded to his utmost desire; for, on his return to court, he so much undervalued the charms of Elfrida, as completely to put an end to the King's anxiety about her: he represented her as "handsome enough in the face, but a deformed cripple in body." Edgar at once, on this, expressed his indifference to the match without reserve; whereupon Ethelwold rejoined:—"Sir, she is her father's heir, and I am not rich of lands;

[1] Athelstan assumed the religious habit of a monk at Glastonbury prior to his decease; his wife, Edgar's foster-mother, was buried in Charteris Nunnery, in Cambridgeshire, an establishment of her own foundation.

and if you would consent, and grant that I might have her, then should I be rich enough." "In God's name," quoth the King, "I consent thereto." Then Ethelwold thanked the King, and returned into Devonshire, and after having "spoused the damsell," he dwelt in that country.[1]

Not long after Elfrida's marriage, her husband, in an evil hour, informed her of all that he had done to deceive King Edgar, who had desired to marry her, and to obtain her for his own wife, confiding in her professed affection, that she would hear the tale with pleasure; but as soon as she was made acquainted with these particulars, "she loved him no more, from that time forwards, as she had done before."[2] In due time she presented Ethelwold with a son, who repaired to court, and solicited Edgar to become sponsor for the infant, which was granted, and the child was named Edgar. Ethelwold, after this condescension on the part of the King, felt more secure than ever from suspicion. The English courtiers had, however, viewed with envy and dissatisfaction the Earl's rich advancement by his marriage; and it was whispered at court, that whatever pecuniary advantages Ethelwold had obtained, his gain was at least an hundred-fold greater in having espoused "the fairest woman that ever was seen."[3] Thus, Edgar too soon became acquainted with the truth, and felt a redoubled curiosity to behold the woman whose beauty, celebrated before, had become so much more renowned as Earl Ethelwold's wife.

Dissembling the resentment which agitated his bosom, Edgar, who was accustomed to devote much of his time

[1] Caxton, William of Malmesbury. [2] Caxton. [3] Ibid.

to the chase, devised a hunting-party,[1] for which the real object was an excuse to visit Devonshire, of which Elfrida's father was Earl, and in which county Ethelwold had hitherto secluded his wife in a state of the strictest privacy, with the hope of guarding her beauty from the monarch's eye. The Earl himself formed one of the party on this momentous occasion. As they approached the house in which Elfrida dwelt, the King informed Ethelwold of his intention to behold the lady whose charms he had heard so highly extolled. The alarmed noble vainly endeavoured to dissuade the King from his purpose; but, unable to succeed, as a last resource hastened forward to apprise Elfrida of the dreaded honour. Some say that the terror felt by Ethelwold at this hour of expected discovery, first wrung from his lips the confession to his wife of the artifice his affection had led him to employ, for the sake of obtaining her hand, while he earnestly besought that she would array herself as unbecomingly as possible, to conceal her beauty from Edgar's eye.

The Earl had misjudged his wife's character, in making this appeal to her good feelings. Hers was not

[1] Edgar was remarkably fond of the chase; so much so that he would frequently hunt on a Sunday. Dunstan reproved him for this, and he owned and amended his error. In his reign it was a too common habit with the clergy to neglect their duties, and mix with the laity in the pleasures of gaming, hunting, dancing, and singing, besides which they lived openly with their concubines or wives. As might be expected, the habits in such a court were not very select. Edgar himself was most devoted to the hunting of the wolf, and he rendered an essential benefit to the country by imposing on Judwal, King of Wales, an annual payment of 300 wolves' heads; in the fourth year this payment ceased, for the want of wolves. It was usual to pay this Welsh tribute at Winchester, whence Wolvesey Castle has derived its name.—Hume, Malmesbury.

a nature to forgive the man who had robbed her of a crown, and bestowed her merely the coronet of an earl's wife. The knowledge of the King's approaching visit awakened all her ambition, and she resolved not to let the opportunity escape of securing his attention. She had secretly pined in the retirement to which Ethelwold's prudence had consigned her. She had sighed, but hitherto in vain, to exhibit her beauty and wealth, in all their pomp, at the splendid court of the monarch, who was a known admirer of female loveliness. The moment so auspicious was at hand, and if lost might never be renewed. Her heart full of contempt amounting almost to hatred for the man who knelt to sue her to adopt the course he desired, she promised to comply with his wish, but her promise was merely a deception to put her husband off his guard. When Edgar arrived, attended by his agitated friend, Elfrida, to his distraction, appeared before her sovereign in a dress resembling that of a bride. The vesture was as rich and costly as she could render it; her golden hair was finely combed, and part of it hanging down in luxuriant curls; her head was crowned with jewels, and a chain of diamonds about her neck gave splendour to her unparalleled beauty.[1] The enraptured monarch had no sooner beheld the lovely apparition, than he resolved, cost what it might, to obtain so rich a treasure. For the time, however, he dissembled his anger against Ethelwold, and seeming to think lightly of her beauty, bade her farewell with apparent indifference. His first step was to order a place of entertainment to be prepared for Elfrida and her husband, in return for their hospitality, near the wood in which they were to hunt,

[1] Heywood's History of Women.

and to which he might repair when his sports were over.

On his return to the spot prepared for his accommodation, King Edgar beheld Elfrida holding in her arms her infant son, his namesake and godson, whom Ethelwold presented to him. On this the sovereign embraced and kissed Elfrida the mother, and became from that moment so much distracted with love, that he could obtain little rest, ever meditating how to obtain her. His schemes were at last determined, and the King acted accordingly. Eight days after, a parliament was called at Salisbury, at which all the magistrates of the land were present. Then Edgar subjected to their consideration his project for the safe custody of Northumberland from the incursions of the Danes; and it was settled that Ethelwold should be appointed governor of York and the adjacent country. This was a deeply planned scheme, apparently intended to honour the Earl to whom he had so recently made a visit, but who was not intended to reap the fruits of the promotion.[1] The Earl was found shortly after murdered, in the Forest of Wherwell, in Hampshire, where it was supposed he had been attacked by robbers when passing through its gloomy shades; but there is no doubt that they were armed men instructed by King Edgar to lie in wait for his former favourite, who, by his orders, barbarously murdered him. Another account given is, that the King's own hand dealt the fatal stroke; that Ethelwold, in passing through the forest, encountered, either by chance or design, his formerly attached but now revengeful master; that the King and Earl conversed for some time with apparent cordiality, till, on

[1] Dugdale.

arriving at the thickest part of the wood, Edgar suddenly drew his dagger and stabbed the Earl to the heart.[1]

While some accounts fix the Forest of Wherwell as the scene of the gloomy tragedy, others point out Harewood Forest, in the north of England, as memorable for the murder of the unfortunate Earl, which indeed is noted by the traditions of the neighbourhood. Mason the poet thus describes the spot:—

> "A darkling dell, which opens in a lawn,
> Thick set with elms around,"—

and in his well-known play, has represented the Countess Elfrida as an angel of light and goodness, full of truth and constancy. Warner, who visited the scene of the Earl's murder, describes it in his work as being half a mile beyond the ancient Castle and Forest of Harewood.

There is an ancient ballad or "Song of King Edgar, showing how he was deceived of his love," which contains these lines:—

> "Thus he that did the king deceive,
> Did by desert his death receive."

No sooner was the news of the murder brought to court, than Edgar "sent for the widow of the glorious Ethelwold, Lord of the East Angles,[2] to come to London, and straightway made her his Queen;[3] and on the same

[1] It is added, that a natural son of Ethelwold passed closely at the time, when the King asked "How it pleased him?" To which the youth servilely replied, "Very well! if it so please your grace, for whatsoever pleaseth you, ought not to displease me!" The answer saved his life, and Edgar afterwards tried to extenuate his murder of the father by lavishing favours on his son.

[2] Flor. Wigorn. [3] Parkins's Hist. of Norwich.

day that the nuptials were solemnized, the King and Queen Elfrida appeared together in public, both of them wearing crowns on their heads; "by which act the people plainly perceived who was the author of the Earl's death, and consequently made no exertions for the discovery of the murderer."[1]

"But," say the chroniclers, "on the morrow morning after their marriage and public appearance with their crowns, Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, came into the King's lodging-chamber, and boldly asked him 'who that was that he had with him?' and it being answered 'the Queen,' the good Archbishop plainly replied, 'that it was against the laws of God and holy Church, to be united to one whose son he had been godfather to, in respect of their spiritual kindred; after which time," continues the historian, "Elfrida never loved St. Dunstan; yet he ceased not to admonish the King of that fault, though to little purpose."[2]

At this very time, when the marriage festivities were going on, began a series of misfortunes to the country in the shape of pestilence and conflagrations. London was devastated by the latter scourge, and the Cathedral of St. Paul was reduced to ashes. Of course the monks did not fail to attribute these events to the indignation of Heaven. Nevertheless, population increased; Edgar remained popular with his subjects, for his public acts were all deserving of praise, and showed both energy and wisdom. He has been blamed for the favour he showed to the Danish settlers, but his expeditions against the Welsh and other disaffected nations, were satisfactory, and brought him both fame and profit.

The date of Elfrida's marriage is fixed by the Saxon

[1] Gaillard's Rivalité. [2] Malmesbury. Dugdale.

Chronicle in 965, an obvious mistake, as her name appears appended to a charter in the year 964; it is therefore very likely that Roger of Wendover is correct in assigning the nuptials to the year 963.

The solemn coronation of Elfrida soon followed her marriage, notwithstanding the reproaches of Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury. It is not, however, certain that Edgar was crowned with her then, but at a later period she shared with him that solemn pageant of royalty. Thus having reached the height of her ambition, Elfrida endeavoured to extinguish her remorse, and atone for her crimes, by erecting a monastery on the spot where Ethelwold had been slain. Aylwin, his brother, had succeeded to the Earldom of East Anglia; he was founder of the Abbeys of Ramsey and Huntingdon, where his statue may yet be seen.[1] The last Earl of East Anglia was Harold, the son of Godwin, and it is somewhat remarkable that his wife was not only, by her marriage to him, Countess of East Anglia, but exchanged that title, like Elfrida for the more exalted one of Queen of England.

Nothwithstanding her ambition, Elfrida could hardly expect to receive higher honours than those accorded to the former consort of Edgar, Ethelflede the Fair, who, in some records of Edgar's reign, is styled only "the King's wife," but never the *Queen*.[2]

Yet while the other consorts of those sovereigns of the heptarchy who had maintained their independence after Edgar, were permitted to enjoy that title which Elfrida had bought at so high a price, it was not in her nature to be content with the honours due to the hus-

[1] Parkins.

[2] Carter and Dugdale. Selden's Titles of Honour.

band only, and reflected from him. Elfrida had worn the crown on her wedding-day, and thus attired, sat like Judith in her chair of state by the side of Edgar; and though we find her afterwards styled frequently "the King's wife," she had also the enviable title of *Regina* accorded to her. A charter granted by Edgar to the Church of Worcester, A.D. 964, the year after his marriage, was signed by Elfrida thus: "Ego Elfyred *Regina* consensi et signo crucis confirmavi;" while another to the Church at Ely, was also attested by her as "Regina."[1]

In King Edgar's Charter of Privilege to Hyde Abbey, by Winchester, which is yet extant, in a hand of that age, in letters of gold, may also be found the signature of Queen Elfrida. First appear the manors and donations of Edgar, Dunstan, Edmund, and Edward; then the subscription of the Queen, who takes precedence of Edgifa, the King's grandmother, that venerable friend and patron of the pious and good during several reigns, the aged relict of King Edward the Elder.

"I, Alfdrid, the lawful wife of the aforesaid King, by my bequest establishing monks in the same place, with the King's permission, have made the mark of the cross." Then follows:—

"I, Eadgifa, grandmother of the aforesaid King, have confirmed this excellent work by the sign of the cross."

The fact of the words "with the King's permission" being inserted, shows that it was not a common custom for the King's wife to attest these charters. In this last document the name of Regina is omitted.

After the second innovation of the law for Elfrida, it

[1] Cott. Lib.

ceased to be regarded in Wessex, and from that time forward we find the Saxon Queens of England were, as a matter of right, crowned, anointed, and seats of state provided for them by the side of their husbands on most public occasions, besides which they bore the title of "Regina" or "Queen."

The Book of Grants, presented by Edgar himself to the Cathedral of Winchester, bearing the date A.D. 966, and written entirely in letters of gold, in the old Saxon character, contains a curious and ancient illumination. The book is in the Cottonian Library, marked "Vespasianus A. VIII.," and an engraving from it may be seen in Strutt's Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities, where the following description is given:—

"Edgar is here delineated as piously adoring our Blessed Saviour, who appears above seated on a globe, to show his empire, and supported by four angels, emblems of the four gospels; under his feet are two folding doors, intended, perhaps, to represent the entrance into the bottomless pit, which is so placed to convey the idea of his triumph over Death and Hell; in his left hand he holds the book of judgment, which is to be opened in the last day."

Strutt supposes the figures on the right and left of the King to be Cuthbert, the Saint of Durham, and Etheldreda, Abbess of Ely. On the opposite page is a Saxon inscription in capital letters of gold, thus translated into modern English:—

> "Thus sits that God alone who made the heavens
> Whilst humbly Edgar the king pays his adoration."

To quote further from Strutt, "as there has been extraordinary pains taken in the writing and ornaments

of this book, and as it was written (which appears by the date) at the very time of Edgar, it is more than barely probable that this is not only an exact delineation of the habit of that monarch, but also (to the best of the illuminator's power) a true portrait of him." The following is the description of the colours of the original:—"The garment of our Saviour is a dark blue, and the lighter robe is gold; so also is the oval he sits in, the book he holds, and the doors under his feet. The angels are dressed in white, and the shadowed part is gold, as well on the habit as on the wings. The king's cloak is a dark blue, edged with gold, his coat a deepish crimson, and his hose a dark brown; his book and crown are gold. The saints, on each side of him, are in blue, and the lighter-coloured part of their garments is gold, as well as the ornaments they hold, and the glory over their heads."

Edgar was one of the greatest friends the Church ever had in this country. He is said to have built forty monasteries, to have completed Glastonbury, which his father had founded, and to have adorned the religious edifices of Abingdon, Thorney, Burgh, and Ramsey, besides founding a building for nuns in Winchester.

Elfrida was present, A.D. 969, at a witenagemote of considerable importance, held at Winchester in the royal palace. In that year Edgar gave instructions to St. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Sts. Oswald and Ethelwold, the Bishops of Worcester and Winchester, to expel all the clerks from the larger monasteries of Mercia, and replace them with monks. This expulsion was in consequence of the dissolute life they led. The clerks who were expelled, desired to prefer a complaint against

the severity of Dunstan, in the King's own presence; and they were met by the Archbishop in the witen at Winchester, the King, Queen, nobles, and clergy being assembled on the occasion. After Dunstan had uttered his defence, the clerks prayed to be restored, and those who held possession of their offices removed. Dunstan spoke not, but hung down his head as if in reverie;[1] but it is said that at this moment a figure of our Lord, affixed to the standard of the cross, appeared in an elevated position in the palace, and a voice was heard saying, "Let it not be done—let it not be done; well have ye judged, ill would ye change." The King and all present, at first astonished and terrified to death almost by his extraordinary appearance, filled the air with their shouts, and assented to the sacred decision.

Ethelwold, one of the three prelates appointed to survey the monasteries, was a pupil of Dunstan, and some of the expelled monks had tried to deprive him of life by poison. It was Ethelwold, who, by Edgar's order, commenced the restoration of the monasteries which had either fallen into decay or been ruined by the Danes.[2] Ely was the first monastery repaired; it had been destroyed by the Danes, A.D. 970, and instead of filling it

[1] It appears evident that this scene was got up by Dunstan, whose knowledge of mechanics, ventriloquism, optics, &c., enabled him easily to impose on the uninformed personages with whom he had to do. The charge of magic has always been made against the learned in the sciences in all unenlightened times, and it was a great temptation to one who had a great end to gain, the feeling that he could so well deceive, without a chance of detection.

[2] Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, in a great famine, sold all the sacred vessels of his church to relieve the poor, saying, "That there was no reason why the senseless temples of God should abound in riches, and lively temples of the Holy Ghost should want them."—Howel, Med. Hist. Ang.

with nuns as before, Ethelwold placed in it a company of monks, under Brithnoth, one of his own society or establishment, whom he constituted abbot. Brithnoth governed Ely in that capacity eleven years, at the end of which his history becomes identified with that of Queen Elfrida, as will be seen in the course of this memoir. The restoration of Medehamstede, after it had laid waste for nearly a hundred years, was commenced in the same year as that of Ely by Ethelwold, and when completed it received the name of Peterborough, which has descended to modern times.[1] Leland relates that Edgar assisted Ethelwold in rebuilding Medehamstede, by the persuasion, some say, of his first wife, Ethelflede the White; but the date of the restoration of this abbey proves that it was Elfrida, and not Ethelflede, by whose counsel he acted. When St. Paul's, in London, was endowed by Edgar with twenty-five mansions and a considerable sum in money, Ethelflede is said to have added her own donation of two lordships, which royal gifts were afterwards confirmed by Ethelred and Canute. These, and the donation of the island of Portsea, to the New Minster, at Winchester, have been attributed to Ethelflede, but appear much more like the acts of Elfrida, who was desirous of purchasing peace with the Church which she had offended. That Elfrida, as well as Edgar, took an active part in the restoration of clerical institutions is evident. In the Cottonian Library is extant a reformation of the monastic life of both sexes, written in King Edgar's time, wherein he takes care of the monks, and his wife Elfrida of the nuns.

Elflede[2] "Candida" (the White), Edgar's first wife, had

[1] Chron. Peterburgens; Ingulphus; Vit. S. Ethelwold.

[2] The name is written at times, Egelfleda and Eneda; also Ethelfleda and Elfleda.

left him two children, Edward, afterwards surnamed the Martyr, and a daughter called Editha, who entered into the seclusion of a conventual life.[1]

The children of Edgar by Elfrida were two sons, of whom the eldest, Edmund Atheling, died in his father's lifetime, A.D. 971, and was interred with princely honours in the Monastery of Rumsey, Hampshire.[2] The youngest of the royal children bore the name of Ethelred, to which was afterwards added the surname of "the Unready," and with his mother's beauty, he inherited some, at least, of her bad qualities.

Not long after the death of her son Edmund, Elfrida lost her father, Earl Ordgar, who was interred at Exeter. In the year of his decease, A.D. 971, this nobleman[3] had commenced an abbey at Tavistock, in Devonshire, which he filled with monks. The edifice itself was on a very grand scale, and not completed till 981; it was finished by Ordulf, the Queen's brother, a person described as of gigantic size and stature, whose figure, and also some of his bones, were exhibited there; but the Danes destroyed the building, about ten years after its completion. Malmesbury records, amongst other instances of the personal strength of Ordulf, that when the drowsy warder of Exeter delayed on one occasion to open the gates, he burst them open, demolishing also the stone jambs on which they hung.

Elfrida seems to have accompanied her husband on most occasions of importance, and probably the King's

[1] Gaillard's Rivalité, &c.

[2] Ramsey and Rumsey were quite different places, though each was distinguished by a convent; that of Ramsey was in Huntingdonshire, and built by Elfrida's brother.

[3] Turner, Roger of Wendover.

leisure intervals were passed in her society, though his infidelities are said to have been great. We are told that the Saxon princes had a palace situate to the north of St. Albans, the site of which is now occupied by King's Bury, to which they were wont to resort at times for their favourite amusement of fishing. "At this royal abode there was a great fishpool, of about twenty acres, which, by the festivities displayed on it, was a great inconvenience to the neighbouring Abbey, till Abbot Ailric procured it, in exchange for *a cup of rich workmanship*, of King Edgar. He had afterwards the embankment cut away, and the waters dispersed; but the situation is still pointed out by Fish Pool Street, in the lower part of St. Albans." The palace itself was not finally demolished till the reign of King Stephen.[1]

The dissolute lives of the clergy during this reign have been already noticed, and, indeed, a great laxity of morals appears to have prevailed among all classes. At this time there were so many Danes in the country, who gave themselves up to drinking and idolatry to such an excess, that they were hardly governable. To repress the vice of drunkenness, the Winchester measure was instituted. Edgar ordained a size, by certain pins in the pot, with a penalty to any that presumed to drink deeper than the mark. Gold and silver nails were also ordered by Dunstan for this same purpose, and were put into the drinking-vessels to prevent inebriety and quarrels. These pins, nails, or pegs, were fastened in the pots, whence the phrase "to drink to the pin," a feat only acquired by long practice.[2]

[1] Britton and Brayley.

[2] The custom of drinking to the pin is thought to have been in-

Edgar also commanded a new coinage, the old having been so reduced, by the fraud of cheating clippers, that scarcely any piece was found to be of worth, when its value was tested in the scales.[1]

There is no doubt that London and Winchester were frequently chosen residences of Edgar and Elfrida, and most probably Worcester, where their son Ethelred II. afterwards erected a tower, called "King Edgar's Tower," because the statues of that King and his two Queens Elfleda and Elfrida are placed on its eastern front.[2]

In 972 Edgar and Elfrida were solemnly crowned at St. Peter's, Bath, the ceremony being performed by Dunstan, on the 11th of May, the Feast of Pentecost. St. Oswald assisted in the ceremonies of consecrating and anointing Edgar and his Queen. For seven years previously Edgar had laid aside his crown, a penance imposed by Dunstan, for his crime in carrying off the nun Wulfreda of Wilton; he now resumed the insignia of royalty in public, and surrounded by his peers, to whom, on this occasion, he presented the customary gifts. The royal robes, worn by Edgar at his

troduced by the Danes themselves, who fixed a pin inside of their wassail-bowl.—Hardy's Notes on William of Malmesbury.

[1] That the byzant or besant, an ancient Greek coin of gold, which was named from ancient Byzantium, and issued by the Greek emperors, was used in England, is proved by the fact that St. Dunstan purchased of King Edgar the estate of Hindon, in Middlesex, for 200 bysants. The coin was generally current in England before the Norman Conquest, and has been introduced in armorial bearings. The value of one bysant, according to Dr. Henry, was nine shillings and fourpence.—Notes to Le Grand's Fabliaux.

[2] Green's History of Worcester.

coronation, are described as of immense valuo, on which account the King afterwards bestowed them on Glastonbury, as a decoration for the altar.

"Much bliss there was, by all enjoyed,
On the happy day named Pentecost;
Crowds of priests, and throngs of monks,
In council sage were gathered there."[1]

Not long after this grand event, Edgar, who seems to have been to the full as fond of pomp and parade as his consort Elfrida, summoned his subreguli at Chester.[2] Kenneth, King of Scots, was among the first to do him homage, and was followed by his nephew, Malcolm of Cumbria, and Maccus, King of Mona and the Isles, by the Princes of Galloway, and the Cymric tribes.[3] During this meeting at Chester, Edgar one day purposed to go by water to the Abbey of St. John the Baptist, and obliged eight of these tributary princes to row him in a barge upon the Dee, Kenneth MacAlpine being one of the number. This king had received Lothian from Edgar, on condition that he should annually attend Edgar's principal feasts, and do him homage for

[1] Saxon Chronicle.

[2] Edgar was, in person, small and thin,* which caused Kenneth to remark with surprise that so many provinces should yield obedience to a man so insignificant. The speech reached the ears of Edgar, who led his guest apart into a wood, and producing two swords, bade him choose one of them. "Our arms," said the king, "shall decide which ought to obey the other; for it will be base to have asserted that at a feast, which you cannot support with your sword." Kenneth, in much confusion, remembered his hasty observation, and "apologised for it as a joke."—Turner.

[3] Palgrave.

* A picture of him may be seen in Wynkyn de Worde.

that district. The English King gave him several houses for his entertainment during his journey, and made him many handsome presents, such as one hundred ounces of pure gold, many silken ornaments, and rings with precious stones.

Amid all the honours accorded to royalty, the highest in such a gay and glorious court, Elfrida must have had her heart's utmost desires fulfilled; but her triumph was not destined to last; and could she have foreseen how little real happiness was to be gained by her crime, even her first steps in that career had perhaps been stayed. Her successes and glories were terminated, in the twelfth year of their marriage, by the King's death, who was then only in the thirty-second year of his age, though the sixteenth of his reign. He died July 8th, 975, and was interred at Glastonbury, with every regal honour. The tomb was, at a later period, 1052, opened[1] by Abbot Ailward, when the King's remains were re-interred within a large shrine covered with gold and silver, and inlaid with beautifully moulded images in ivory, which had been Edgar's own present to the Church.

Immediately the King's death became known, two mighty factions arose, which threatened to lead to a civil war. The King's will had declared that the crown should devolve on Edward, the son of his first wife, an amiable Prince, then in the thirteenth year of his age;

[1] The opening of the tomb is said to have been attended with several miracles. Not only was the royal corpse fresh and incorrupt, but the abbot, seeing it was too large for the receptacle prepared for it, having profanely hacked it with a steel instrument in his hand, to his own horror, and that of the spectators, torrents of blood burst forth from the wound. The abbot afterwards became insane and died a violent death!—Saxon Chronicle.

but the ambitious Elfrida desired to secure the throne to her son Ethelred, then but a child of about seven, and objected to Edward's claim, that his mother either had not been lawfully married to Edgar, or that the young prince was born before their coronation, and that he was illegitimate, besides which the Queen alleged he was of a harsh and cruel disposition.[1] As Elfrida had always possessed great influence with the late King, she had acquired many friends, who now became partizans in favour of Ethelred's succession;[2] but many of the nobles who were acquainted with her imperious temper, dreaded the consequences of her being placed as Regent at the head of the State, which must have been the case if Ethelred was elected king, and of this number was the Queen's old enemy, Dunstan, still the most powerful person in the kingdom, to whom even monarchs had been forced to submit. It was this prelate who stept forward in the emergency, to carry into effect the claims of Edward, knowing that he was supported by the wishes of the people generally, and by Oswald and other bishops and nobles, who desired the late King's will to be respected. Dunstan, indeed, was the last person in the world who was willing to suffer such a diminution of his own power as would have been the result of Ethelred's advancement, when his mother Elfrida was directly his opponent; he accordingly convened an assembly of nobles at Kingston, for the purpose of crowning and anointing Edward. The faction of Elfrida, among whom was Alfer, Duke of Mercia, formally declared against the ceremony taking place; the Queen herself, who was present, objected on account of the Prince's illegitimacy, which rendered her

[1] Brit. Sancta, Lingard. [2] Hume.

son the legal heir.[1] At this crisis Dunstan appeared, bearing in his hands the banner of the crucifix, accompanied by young Edward, whom he presented to the lords as their rightful monarch, declaring that he would himself be responsible for their Prince's conduct, whom he would regulate as his father's tutor and prime-minister. This promise of Dunstan united the wavering minds of the assembled lords, and Edward was received with universal joy.[2] Taking the youth by the hand, Dunstan marched directly to the church, accompanied by the other bishops, and followed by a great crowd of people, where he anointed him King, in spite of the opposition of Elfrida and her party, who were overwhelmed with grief at the priest's triumph.[3]

This public acknowledgment of Edward by Dunstan proves the validity of his mother's marriage, and the base artifice Elfrida had employed against him. Had he really been illegitimate, as an author observes who was of that opinion himself,[4] Elfrida might justly be excused for desiring the true heir to become king.

Even after the coronation was over, the Queen still continued to strive by all possible means to get Ethelred's claim acknowledged, and so far inveigled Edward by her flattery, that he suffered her to order all the affairs of the kingdom, retaining for himself merely the title of King. At the same time he was, if possible, still more devoted to St. Dunstan and his followers than his father had been, so that the nation had every hope the reign would be prosperous and happy. All these expecta-

[1] Brit. Sancta, Osbern, and Capgrave. [2] Holinshed.

[3] Henry.

[4] Holinshed says, Edward was born of a nun named Elfleda, and not of Edgar's Queen.

tions were, however, frustrated by the Queen's ambition, who could not rest tranquil. She opposed Dunstan in all ways, and her friends, the opponents of the Church in general, destroyed the monasteries which Edgar had built. It will be remembered that the enemies of Dunstan and Ethelwold, among the clergy, had been ejected, on account of dissolute conduct, from their offices. Elfrida, to strengthen the party of Ethelred, declared herself openly their patroness, the highest affront which could have been offered to Dunstan; besides which she tried to bias the minds of the great in favour of her son. Mercia and Earl Alfer sided with her and with those who protected the disgraced clergy. Essex and East Anglia, with their Earls, sided with the King and Dunstan, to whose will he was subject, and who therefore was possessed of great power, yet had to cope with one who was as ambitious as himself, and perhaps even more unprincipled as to the means of gratifying the passion. There was every prospect of a civil war, when Elfrida perceived another method of attaining her object: she joined in a conspiracy to assassinate Edward, and accident shortly after furnished her with an opportunity of effecting her purpose.[1]

The young King had shown, from the first, every mark of respectful attention to Elfrida, to whom he had presented the county of Dorset as a dowry, affixing to it a royal dignity.[2]

The monarch was returning from a hunting excursion in Dorsetshire, near Wareham, not far from which stood Corfe Castle, the residence of his mother-in-law and of her son Ethelred. While his companions were earnestly pursuing the game, Edward was left alone, and perceiv-

[1] Gaillard's Rivalité, and others. [2] Turner.

ing the walls of the castle in the distance, he hastened thither to pay his respects with his accustomed courtesy to his mother-in-law, who, on perceiving him, with feigned affability welcomed, and invited him to alight and refresh himself. This, however, Edward declined, but requested a cup of wine to be brought him, and at the same time inquired for his brother. Whether Elfrida had premeditated this treachery towards her son-in-law or whether the favourable opportunity suggested this act of cruelty, remains uncertain; she, however, commissioned one of her creatures[1] to stab the King in the back, while in the act of drinking. Edward, finding himself wounded, spurred his horse to rejoin his friends, but from loss of blood fell from his seat, and one of his feet being caught in the stirrup, he was dragged for some time by the affrighted animal, who being at length arrested near a house on the road side, the mangled corpse was found there by some domestics of the Queen, who had tracked him thither by the blood, and by commands previously received from Elfrida, they threw the body into a well.[2] As Roger of Wendover relates, "The wicked woman Alfdritha, and her son Ethelred, ordered the corpse of the king and martyr, St. Edward, to be ignominiously buried at Wareham, in the midst of public rejoicing and festivity, as if they had buried his memory and his body together; for now that he was dead, they grudged him ecclesiastical sepulture, as when he was alive they robbed him of royal honour." The young Ethelred, however, deserved not the blame even of a participation in this cruel transaction; for he had tenderly loved the King his brother, and wept

[1] Knyghton and Burke say the Queen herself did the deed.

[2] Gaillard's Rivalité, &c.

bitterly on hearing the news of his death. Elfrida, unable to pacify him, was so much offended, that it is added, "having no rod at hand, in the violent paroxysm of her anger, she seized some tapers that stood before her, and beat the boy so severely that she had almost killed him, too, upon the spot. So terrified was the child that he never after could endure to have any of those sort of candles lighted before him."[1] The tapers of the middle ages were from *five to seven pounds weight*, and being placed in candlesticks of silver, formed an ornament for the bedchamber of ladies. King Alfred, it is well known, caused his candles to be adapted to the measurement of time. Elfrida's correction was, therefore, by no means of a gentle kind.

A MS. Psalter, preserved in the Royal Library at the British Museum, having been formerly presented to Queen Mary in 1553, by Baldwin Smith, a citizen of London, contains an engraving which represents Edward hunting, and his visit to Corfe Castle. The same attendant who offers the King a cup of drink, is seen there stabbing him with a dagger. One of our modern customs, that of pledging each other at table, arose from the circumstances attending the death of Edward. The old Saxon mode of pledging, when two persons drank together, was as follows:—"The person who was going to drink, asked any one of the company that sat next him, whether he would pledge him. On which, he answering that he would, held up his sword or knife to guard him whilst he drank; for while a man is drinking he necessarily is in an unguarded posture, exposed to the traitorous stroke of some hidden or secret enemy; this practise originated from the treacherous conduct of Elfrida to her son-in-law."[2]

[1] Holinshed. [2] Strutt.

The friends of the deceased King soon discovered the remains of their murdered sovereign, and having burnt the body, interred the ashes at Wareham.[1] But the deed was not destined to be thus passed over, for "the innocent victim" of Elfrida "was ennobled with the grace of miracles."[2] The King's body, on the night of the murder,[3] had been carried into a cottage, where a poor woman dwelt, who was maintained by the charity of Elfrida: she was blind, but is said to have been restored suddenly to sight. This miraculous circumstance, being reported next morning to the Queen, much affrighted her.[4] The report of the miracle spread, and multitudes are said to have resorted to the tomb, whereon such a celestial light was shed, that the lame were enabled to walk, the blind to see, and the dumb to speak; all who laboured under any infirmity being healed.[5] "Among the rest, the murderess took her journey thither. Having mounted her horse, she urged him to go forward, when, lo! he who before outstripped the winds, and was full of ardour to bear his mistress, now, by the will of God, stood immovable; nor could her attendants move him at all with their shouts and blows: their labour was still in vain, when another horse was put in his place."[6] Neither the horse which the Queen rode, nor any other, would approach the spot, in spite of whips and spurs, and every other means tried to make them go forward. On which the murderess

[1] Gaillard, &c. [2] Roger of Wendover.

[3] In 1245, Pope Innocent IV. ordained that the day of Edward's murder should be kept as a festival: the exact date of the event was March 18th, 979 (Brit. Sancta). He had reigned three years.

[4] Brit. Sancta. A church was afterwards built upon the spot, to commemorate the restoration of the blind woman to sight.

[5] Roger of Wendover. [6] Ibid.

perceived "how great had been her offence against God, in shedding the blood of the innocent; and she repented deeply of her sin,[1] and gave up her intention of visiting the tomb, resolving to pass the rest of her days in penance and prayer:" of this resolve she evidently put off the accomplishment. So many miracles indeed were wrought by the sainted King, who, for his death, was surnamed "the Martyr," that it was thought desirable to transfer his relics to a more fitting receptacle. Some say, this holy ceremony was performed by his sister St. Editha; others relate that Earl Elfery, who was one of the most forward partizans of Elfrida, and had been one of those who destroyed the monasteries of the monks, bitterly repenting of his fault, removed the King's sacred body from that mean place, three years after, with great solemnity, to the monastery at Shaftesbury.[2]

The Saxon Chronicle[3] notices Edward's murder in these terms:—

"There has not been 'mid Angles
A worse deed done
Than this was,
Since they first
Britain-land sought.
Men him murdered,
But God him glorified.
He was in life
An earthly king;
He is now after death
A heavenly saint.

[1] Holinshed, Roger of Wendover.

[2] "Though, even this way, he did not escape condign punishment, being eaten with worms the following year."—Roger of Wendover.

[3] Saxon Chronicle; Brit. Sancta.

Him would not his earthly
Kinsmen avenge,
But him hath his Heavenly Father
Greatly avenged,
The earthly murderers
Would his memory
On earth blot out,
But the Lofty Avenger
Hath his memory
In the heavens
And on earth wide spread.
They who would not erewhile
To his living
Body bow down,
They now humbly
On knees bend
To his dead bones.
Now we may understand
That men's wisdom,
And their devices,
And their councils,
Are like nought
'Gainst God's resolves."

Ethelred "Atheling," or the "Noble," for whom Elfrida had been guilty of so great a crime, was too young at the time to be considered an accomplice in her guilt; yet it was with no small repugnance that the prelates and thanes bestowed on him a crown bought with the price of blood:[1] Dunstan more especially felt this, yet was compelled to anoint Ethelred, a measure not to be avoided. The ceremony of inauguration took place at Kingston-on-Thames, Sunday, April the 24th.[2] The new monarch, who is described as "a rare youth, of a graceful person, fair countenance, and lofty stature,

[1] The usual atonement for murder, called the Weregild, was paid by Elfrida at the time of Edward's death.—Lingard.

[2] A.D. 979.

received the royal diadem from Dunstan of Canterbury, and Oswald of York, in the presence of ten bishops, and the rest of the assembled clergy and nobles.[1] Dunstan is said on this occasion to have been moved, by a prophetic spirit, to declare to the young Prince all the calamities to which the kingdom would be exposed during his reign, in the following words:—"Because thou hast aspired to the crown by the death of thy brother, whom thy mother hath murdered, therefore hear the word of the Lord: the sword shall not depart from thy house, but shall furiously rage all the days of thy life, killing thy seed, till such time as thy kingdom shall be given to a people whose customs and language the nation thou now governest know not: neither shall thy sin, the sin of thy mother, and the sin of those men who were partakers of her counsels, and executors of her wicked design, be expiated, but by a long and most severe vengeance.[2] Dunstan survived this event nine years, at the end of which he died, A.D. 988, after having witnessed the reigns of five monarchs, and part of that of a sixth, viz., Ethelred.

This last event took place many years before the decease of Elfrida, who survived her worst enemy and greatest rival. Indeed, it was probably the ascendancy of the Queen's faction which embittered and shortened Dunstan's life; for Edward the Martyr, ruled by his counsels, would have carried on everything as Edgar his father had left it; but, as Dunstan had perceived from the first, the ascendancy of the mother of Ethelred, and such as took part with her under her son's authority, was likely enough "to turn all upside down."[3] One of the motives attributed to Elfrida for the commission

[1] Roger of Wendover. [2] Holinshed. [3] Ibid.

of Edward's murder, was her desire to subvert the authority of Dunstan. In this, however, she was unsuccessful, and gained only the popular aversion; for neither remorse nor hypocrisy could ever reinstate her in the public opinion.

But even yet Elfrida's crimes were not ended: in the year 981 another murder stained her guilty hand. Turner remarks as singular, the fact that this circumstance of the murder of Brithnoth, first Abbot of Ely, by Elfrida, should have escaped historians in general, being merely noticed in the following manner in the History of Ely:[1]—"It happened that, on a certain day, the Abbot Bridnod set out for King Ethelred's court, on affairs of the Church. When near Geldesdune, on his way through the wood called New Forest, he is said to have turned aside in search of some secluded spot for prayer, where, by accident, he discovered the Queen Ælstritha engaged, under a tree, in her practices of witchcraft. The Queen uttered an expression of consternation at being detected, but the holy man, inwardly troubled, retreated as quickly as possible from the spot, and proceeded on his way to the court. Here he was magnificently received by the King, and having speedily accomplished the purpose of his journey, was on the point of returning home, rejoicing in the royal munificence. Not willing, however, to shame the Queen, though abhorrent, he first went to seek an interview with her, which she, when aware of his coming, desired might be strictly private, under a pretext of her requiring spiritual counsel. Summoning some women of her household, devoted to her will, she gave orders that he should be put to death. That no wound might appear

[1] Gale's Scriptores Hist. Elieni.

on the body, the perpetrators were instructed to pierce him beneath the armpits with *bodkins* till he expired. Whereupon she cried out as if terrified by a sudden calamity. The servants and companions of the Abbot run to the spot, and hear, with groans, of the previous arrival and sudden death of their master: with much grief and lamentation they place his body on a vehicle, and convey it back to Ely, where, not detecting any visible marks of violence, they commit it to the tomb. Thus was the first abbot of the holy church of Ely martyred,[1] by the contrivance of a good-for-nothing woman, preferring to fall into human hands, rather than to transgress the divine law, earning for his soul eternal joy in heaven, where he shall reign with all saints.

"As to the Queen, no one presumed even to whisper a suspicion, or bring an evil report upon her. And this matter might have continued to be hidden from all, had not she herself, by the Divine mercy, been seized with compunction for her witchcrafts and abominable practices, and especially for the death of the glorious King Edward, her eldest son, to whose murder (to make a way to the throne for Ethelred, her subsequent issue) she confessed, and for which deed she raised, at her own expense, the Convent of Werewelle. Here she spent the remainder of her days in grief and penitence, and detailed, with groans and anguish, the manner in which she had slain Bridnod, Abbot of Ely, as above related."[2]

Elfrida's motive in this act was, as usual, her desire for power. The whole of the isle of Ely had been purchased of King Edgar for a small sum, by Ethelwold,

[1] Some records place the event in A.D. 981.

[2] Rog. of Wend.

Bishop of Winchester, one of the Dunstan party, who, in the year 970, placed in the monastery he had renewed, an abbot and monks, for whom he obtained many privileges from the monarch, with whom he was a great favourite. This abbot was Bridnoth, one of his own monks. Elfrida, after Ethelred's advancement to the throne, still maintained her spleen against Dunstan. Brithnoth had come to court on this occasion concerning matters connected with his church, and having *succeeded* in his mission, was about to depart with a joyful heart, when the Queen interfered and caused the Abbot's assassination. The "magic practices" he was said to have witnessed, were probably some of the Danish rites, or she had been consulting the wise-women on her own future destiny and that of Dunstan. Brithnoth had ruled Ely eleven years from his first appointment, and on his death, Elsy, or Elfsy, was appointed abbot in his place, by King Ethelred.[1] The brotherhood of Ely had their suspicions on the suddenness of their former abbot's decease, but the power of Elfrida silenced all. Not long after Brithnoth's murder, we find that, at the invitation of Bishop Ethelwold, the young King and his mother went, with several of the nobility, to visit the church of Ely, and took the opportunity to go in procession to the tomb of St. Etheldreda; when the young monarch, having a great love and affection for the Saint, promised, in the presence of all who were there assembled, to become from henceforth her devoted servant. In consequence, Ethelred afterwards, on several occasions testified great kindness and regard for that church, and, as a particular mark of favour, was "pleased to grant

[1] Dugdale.

that the head of the church of Ely should hold and enjoy the office and dignity of Chancellor in the King's court: the like he also granted to two other churches, viz., St. Augustine's in Canterbury, and Glastonbury, thus dividing the chancellorship between the abbots of those three monasteries, who were to enjoy the office by turns."[1]

Elfrida was obviously desirous of making her peace with the offended clergy through the grants of Ethelred, then but twelve years of age. Of course it was she who held the administration of Church and State affairs, for a weakness of character was apparent in Ethelred from an early age, which was in a great measure attributable to the tyrannical and arbitrary influence maintained over him by his mother. As the King grew older this influence gradually declined, until Elfrida, finding herself the object of popular aversion, became aware that her power was at an end: on which, pretending to be moved by her conscience, she determined to bid farewell to the court,[2] and to close her days in a monastery, the usual resource of baffled ambition in these days. She accordingly founded, in 986, the Monastery of Werewell,[3] in expiation of the deaths of her first husband, Earl Ethelwold, and her son-in-law, Edward the Martyr; and within the walls of this edifice, of the Benedictine order, the yet beautiful Elfrida, renouncing her worldly grandeur, the incentive to her many crimes, exchanged the robes of royalty for sackcloth, and having professed herself a

[1] Dugdale; who places the visit of Ethelred in his brother's reign; but as Bridnoth was dead, and Elfsy abbot, it was plainly during his own.

[2] Lingard.

[3] "Wherwell."—Dugdale.

nun, dwelt in mourning and great penitence, a great part of her remaining life;[1] here she practised every kind of austerity. "Her flesh, which she had nourished in delicacy, she mortified with haircloth at Wherwell,"[2] sleeping on the ground, and afflicting her body with all kinds of sufferings,[3] such as fasting and various kinds of penance. Although the weregeld, the price of murder, had been paid, the guilty Queen was a prey to remorse and apprehension, and among other self-inflicted punishments, is said to have "worn armour, made of little crosses, which she thought could alone secure her from an imaginary phantom, or evil spirit, which incessantly haunted her imagination."[4] Nor was private mortification enough; Elfrida tried to atone for her misdeeds by the publicity of her repentance, yet could she never reinstate herself in public opinion.[5] She expended large sums on the poor, and in building churches and monasteries, to the amount of her whole patrimony.[6] Elfrida founded a monastery at Andover, and another at Ambresbury in Wiltshire, a town on the Upper Avon. This last was founded A.D. 980, in expiation of the murder of Edward the Martyr; it was of the Benedictine order, and commended to the patronage of St. Mary, and St. Meliorus, a Cornish saint, whose relics were preserved there.[7]

Another abbey, or rather a small nunnery, was erected by her at Reading, on the spot now occupied by St. Mary's Church, being the third edifice founded in 980,

[1] Dugdale, Brit. Sancta. [2] Roger of Wendover, Holinshed.
[3] Clavis Calendaria. [4] Lingard.
[5] Holinshed, Gaillard, Bicknell, Lysons's Magna Brit.
[6] Dugdale. [7] Britton and Brayley.

the year after King Edward's death:[1] Henry I. suppressed this A.D. 1120, but the following year built a magnificent abbey there for two hundred Benedictine monks, which he dedicated to the honour of God, our Lady, and St. John the Evangelist, and appropriated to its use the revenues of the earlier foundation.

Elfrida's rapacity is seen in all her actions. Wulfreda, the injured nun of Wilton, had presided many years over the Monastery of Barking, when some dissensions arose between her and the priests of Barking, who referred their cause to Elfrida, requesting her to eject Wulfreda, and assume the government in her own person. To this proposal Elfrida readily assented, and on the Queen's assuming the presidency of the Monastery of Barking, Wulfreda was forced to retire to a religious house, which she had founded at Horton, in Devonshire.[2] Elfrida presided at Barking for twenty years, at the end of which, while still residing there, she was seized with a violent sickness, and in the probable dread of approaching dissolution, repenting the injury she had done Wulfreda, she caused her to be reinstated in her former situation. Seven years afterwards Wulfreda died in London, whither she had retired to avoid the Danish army then invading England. This retaliation of Elfrida on her former rival in the King's affections, at so distant a period, marks how deeply the feelings of jealousy and revenge were implanted in her bosom.

Elfrida retired from Barking to Wherwell, where she died in 1002, in a state of extreme penitence, and

[1] Leland, Camden, Speed. [2] Britton and Brayley.

at a very advanced age.[1] King Ethelred granted to Wherwell, in the year of his mother's death, a charter of confirmation, on account of its being the place in which she ended her days, and which contained her last remains.[2]

[1] Dugdale. [2] Ibid.

EMMA OF NORMANDY,

SURNAMED "THE PEARL,"

QUEEN OF ETHELRED "THE UNREADY" AND CANUTE "THE GREAT."

CONTENTS.

The Pearl of Normandy—Parentage of Emma—Quarrels settled—Emma's Marriage with Ethelred, 1002, at Winchester—She receives the popular name of Elfgiva—Unsuitableness of Ethelred—His personal appearance—The songs of Gunnlaugr the Scald—The Sagas: their value—Danegelt, its odiousness to the English—Massacre of the Danes on the Eve of St. Brice—Gunilda's fate—Her anathema—Emma's sorrow concealed—The neglect of Ethelred towards his wife—She appeals to her brother—Anger of the Duke of Normandy—Reconciliation—Hugh and Alwyn—Siege of Exeter—Oath of fealty to Emma's unborn babe—Birth of her son, Edward the Confessor—Alfred, the eldest son, set aside on account of a prophecy—Emma flies from the troubles in England, with her children, to Normandy—Remains there two years—They are followed by Ethelred—"Unready" a title fitting for the weak King—London Bridge is broken down—Edmund Ironside—Algitha at Malmesbury Abbey—Death of Ethelred—Canute marries Emma—Her weight in gold—Influence of Emma—Mutual attachment—Danish dandies—Drinking-cups—Back-gammon—Poets—Story of Canute and his courtiers—Splendid gifts to abbeys—The King's

verses—Vauland, the smith—Hardicanute and Gunilda—King Olaf—Death of Canute—Earl Godwin's power—Treacherous letter to Emma's sons—Murder of Alfred—Suspicions—Harold—Emma's exile and return—Hardicanute—The gilded ship—The dwarf Mimicon—Death of Hardicanute—Edward succeeds—His conduct to his mother—The trial of the ploughshares—Triumph—Death of Emma.

THE first alliance between the English and the Normans, who afterwards ruled England with such despotic sway, took place in 1002, when Emma, who for her beauty was surnamed "the Pearl of Normandy," became the wife of Ethelred, the reigning monarch.

The family of Emma was of Scandinavian origin. Rollo, or Robert, her great-grandfather, after an unsuccessful invasion of England, in the reign of Alfred, had turned his arms against the natives of the neighbouring coast of France, who, finding themselves unable to oppose their warlike invaders, offered Robert a settlement in their territories. Charles the Simple, then on the French throne, yielded to Rollo part of the Province of Neustria, and bestowed on him at the same time the hand of his daughter Gisla, on condition that the Dane should do him homage as a vassal. The territory ceded to Rollo from that time went by the name of Normandy, and the Duke, when he died, bequeathed it to his son, Duke William I., who held it for twenty-five years. This prince was succeeded by Richard his son, then a minor, whose wife was Agnes, daughter of Hugh the Great, Earl of Paris, by whom he had no children. By Gunnora, his second wife, he had three sons, Richard, Robert, and Mauger; and three daughters, Emma-Agnes, Helloie or Alix, and Maud. The eldest of these princesses, named after Richard's first consort, was

afterwards Queen of England, Alix espoused Geoffrey, Earl of Bretagne, and Maud became the wife of Eudes, Earl of Chartres and Blois.

Ethelred, King of England, had quarrelled with Duke Richard I., on some subject which has not been handed down to us. A fleet was prepared by Ethelred for the invasion of Normandy, and Richard, on his part, arrested all the English pilgrims and merchants in his dominions, some of whom he threw into prison, while others he condemned to death. Pope John XV. employed his legate Leo, Bishop of Treves, to reconcile the contending princes. Leo visited first Ethelred, and afterwards Richard, and, at his request, commissioners were appointed to meet at Rouen, when it was agreed that all ancient causes of dissension should be forgotten, that a perpetual peace should subsist between the King of England and the Marquess[1] of Normandy, their children born and to be born, and all their true liege-men; that every infraction of this peace should be repaired by satisfactory compensation; and that neither prince should harbour the subjects nor the enemies of the other, without a written permission.[2] This, the oldest treaty now extant between any of our kings and a foreign power, is drawn up in the name of the Pope, and confirmed by the oaths and marks of one bishop and two thanes on the part of Ethelred, and of one bishop and two barons on the part of Richard:[3] it was signed at Rouen, March 1st, 991.

[1] The title of Marquess or Duke is indiscriminately used, in the treaty, for the father of Emma.

[2] Malmsbury says that the subjects of either Prince were to be provided with passports under seal, in travelling through the other's dominions.

[3] Lingard.

In the eighth year after Ethelred's accession, he had married Ethelgina, daughter of Earl Thorold, by whom he had five children, Edmond, surnamed Ironside, for his strength of mind and body, Edwy, and three daughters. The Queen dying in 1002, Ethelred sent ambassadors to Normandy to demand the hand of Emma, sister of the reigning duke, Richard II. It is not unlikely that some overtures had been made at an earlier period, prior to Ethelred's first marriage, for this beautiful princess, who was then but a child; for Roger of Wendover says that Emma was the cause of the quarrel between her father and Ethelred, but no particulars have reached us.

Duke Richard II. gave a most honourable reception to the English embassy. The negotiation for the marriage was speedily concluded, and the same year that witnessed the death of Ethelgina, saw the young and blooming "Flower of Normandy" solemnly bestowed on the recently widowed King. In Lent, 1002, the new Queen came over to England, attended by a numerous retinue of French men and women.[1] The nuptial ceremony was performed at Winchester, which, from that time, became a favourite residence of Emma, and was the spot in which she passed the earlier years of her married life. Both Saxon and Norman chroniclers unite in representing the youthful Queen Emma[2] as in a peculiar degree gifted with elegance and beauty; so that many flattering epithets had been bestowed on

[1] Ingulphus, Gale, Saxon Chronicle.

[2] Gemma and Ymma, Imma and Emie are various readings of the name Emma, which some say is identical with Amy, in Latin written Amata and Eutrophine; in Greek it signifies a *good nurse*, or help-giver, as the Saxons say.

her—as "the Pearl," "the Flower," or "the Fair Maid" of Normandy. As she readily adopted the manners of the English on her arrival, she became so much beloved by them as to receive the popular surname of Elfgifa, the Elf or "Fairy Gift," and is called in the Saxon Chronicle Emma Elfgiva: several of her female predecessors among the queens-consort of England having, as has been before named, assumed this title, in honour of the wife of Edmund the Pious.

Ethelred was much older than Emma, being about thirty-four years of age at the time of his second marriage, and in some respects exceedingly unsuited to win the affections of the young and lovely bride whom he had selected. The son of Elfrida, who had perhaps herself witnessed the second nuptials of Ethelred, or at least lived to counsel them, inherited his mother's beauty of person, with many of its accompanying vices. He is represented to have been "a tall, handsome man, elegant in manners, beautiful in countenance, and interesting in his deportment;"[1] yet Malmesbury characterises his personal appearance, sarcastically calling him "*a fine sleeping figure.*" Amongst other weaknesses, he was open to flattery, as is evident from the patronage he afforded to Gunnlaugr the Scald, who, having sailed to London from Norway, presented himself to the King with an heroic poem which he had composed on the *royal virtues.*

"The adulatory style of this composition, which the author sang before the English Monarch, may be seen by the following lines:—

[1] Turner, from Gunnlaugr Saga.

" The soldiers of the King, and his subjects,
The powerful army of England,
Obey Ethelred,
As if he was *an angel of the beneficent Deity.*"

Ethelred, having listened to the poet, bestowed on him in return for his verse "a purple tunic, lined with the richest furs, and adorned with fringe," and gave him an appointment within the palace. On his departure from the court, in the following spring, Gunnlaugr received from his royal patron a gold ring, of the weight of seven ounces, accompanied by a request that he would return in the autumn. The Scald visited Ireland and sang: "the king there wished to give him two ships, but was told by his treasurer that poets had always clothes, or swords, or gold rings given them. Gunnlaugr accordingly had a present of fine garments and a gold ring." In the Orkneys he was rewarded with a silver axe.

The Scalds were persons of some importance, and having much in their power, were generally well treated by those monarchs who were anxious for their good report. They were, says Laing, a kind of "wandering scholars, natives generally of Iceland, and a class of more consequence than mere amusement at a court could have made them."[1] They were, in fact, the recorders of events, and many of their songs, or sagas, are family annals. "They were frequently employed as messengers and ambassadors, who carried the tokens which monarchs or nobles exchanged with each other. These tokens were not merely gifts, but had a meaning known to the personages, and accredited the messenger." Such personages were necessary at a time when reading

[1] Laing's Norway.

and writing were rare accomplishments amongst princes.

"The language of the Scalds seems to have been understood at the courts of all the branches of the Scandinavian people; the same Scald appears to have visited on business or pleasure the courts of Rouen, of England, of Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and there is no mention of any difficulty arising from difference of language in any of the transactions of individuals. These were frequently adventurers passing from the service of one monarch to another."[1]

The sagas are extremely valuable, as the Scalds recorded the passing events of the time, and any falsehood or exaggeration would have been detected by contemporaries.

Ethelred had made the alliance with Normandy from policy, to gain aid against his formidable enemies, the Danes, who at that time were incorporated among the English, and led a careless and easy life, treating them as though they were their servants and drudges, while their wives and daughters became slaves to their pleasure, whence they had even obtained the epithet of "Lord Danes." Great part, indeed, of England had a government according to Danelagh. All this had been brought about by the pusillanimity of Ethelred, who, instead of meeting his foes in fair and open strife, had bought off their hostilities by a yearly sum of money, known under the name of Dane-gelt, long the most odious tax felt in England. Every year these intruders became more dangerous and increasingly powerful, and by degrees settled in the very heart of his dominions. Ethelred, therefore, in marrying Emma, whose mother Gunnora,

[1] Laing's Norway.

was descended of an eminent Danish family, expected the alliance would be instrumental in obliging the Danes to ameliorate their conduct,[1] if, indeed, he could not obtain of Duke Richard assistance to wholly extirpate them from the country, which groaned beneath their tyranny. In these calculations, however, Ethelred was grievously mistaken. The Normans and Danes were, as has been shown, descended from the same stock,[2] and the Norman Duke did not perceive any motive sufficiently strong, as regarded his own interest, to induce him to embroil himself in war with the relatives of his mother for the sake of entering into the schemes of the husband of his sister Emma. Whether Ethelred was so blind as to believe that his new ally would sanction the unparalleled act of cruelty of which he was guilty, in the very year of his marriage, and almost before the rejoicings for that event were over, it seems hard to believe; yet so puffed up was the weak King with his notion of newly-acquired power that, instigated by his favourites, he gave orders for a general massacre of the Danes throughout the country. The day before St. Brice's Day, secret letters were sent by Ethelred to every city, commanding the English at an appointed hour to destroy the Danes by fire and sword.[3] Neither

[1] Echard.

[2] "The Earls of Rouen are descended from Gange Rolf; they have long reckoned themselves of kin to the chiefs in Norway, and hold them in such respect, that they always were the greatest friends of the Northmen, and every Northman found a friendly country in Normandy, if he required it."—Snorro.

[3] Rapin compares the Danish massacre to that of the Romans under Boadicea. The day selected for it was Sunday, too, the festival of St. Brice, when they were unarmed and taking their bath.

age nor sex was spared—men, women, and children being mercilessly slaughtered; the Saxon females even falling on their helpless foes, unarmed, and on a day of festival, maiming with scythes and reaping-hooks those whom they could not kill. Amongst those who perished was Gunilda, sister of Sweyn, the Danish monarch, who had been given as a hostage for the treaty of peace concluded between her brother and the perfidious Ethelred. Having embraced Christianity, and married Palling, a Saxon courtier, she had settled in this country. This noble lady beheld her husband and children massacred before her eyes: she herself was killed by strokes from a lance. In the agony of her grief for the loved ones who were falling around her, her words to the Saxon murderers were, "God will punish you, and my brother will avenge my death." Her prophetic denunciation was fulfilled, for England not long after sunk beneath the Danish yoke.[1]

Those who seek an excuse for such an act on the part of Ethelred, assert that he had cause to suspect the Danes of a plot to murder him and his Witan, and to seize upon the kingdom. This was the pretext for the atrocious action of which he was guilty, and which, instead of consolidating his power, annihilated the peace and security of the kingdom. At a moment when he had just formed an alliance with Emma, descended of the same blood as the victims, the policy of this massacre was singularly shortsighted. The young Queen's horror must have been extreme when she found that the solemnities and festivities of her marriage were thus converted into a scene of general bloodshed and mourning. The spirit of the ruthless Elfrida seems to have

[1] Rivalité de France et de l'Angleterre.

governed Ethelred on this occasion; and perhaps Emma's indignant sorrows were checked by him as violently as when his mother had beaten him "with waxen candles," when mourning over the murder of his own brother, Edward the Martyr, the victim of her ambition.

There were other causes for trouble in the mind of Emma, who, though possessed of unrivalled beauty, had failed in securing the affections of her husband. From the time of their marriage, the King had neglected her company, and associated with unworthy favourites, both male and female.[1] Emma felt this deeply: she had been idolised by her own countrymen, and was beloved by her new Saxon subjects. Young, lovely, learned, and highly accomplished, she felt that the treatment of Ethelred was so degrading to her merit, that she resolved at length to return to Normandy. Roger of Wendover seems to infer faults on her side, as well as on that of her husband; but he acknowledges that "the King was so petulant to his wife," that he would scarcely admit her to his intimacy; and she, on her part, "proud of her high descent, and irritated against him, blackened him in no small degree to her *father*."[2] The Duke of Normandy, on receiving the account sent by Emma of her ill-treatment, despatched messengers to fetch her back to her own country; but, alarmed at the probable consequences, Ethelred thought it better to reconcile his Queen, which having effected, the Norman ambassadors returned without her. From that time, however, the Duke exhibited much coldness towards Ethelred, doubtless being aware of the hollowness of the apparent reconciliation;

[1] Holinshed. [2] It should be her *brother*.

and when Ethelred sought his assistance against the Danes, he could not obtain attention to his request.

The expectations that Emma's marriage would turn out very advantageous to England, therefore, failed altogether. The Normans, on the contrary, instead of procuring defenders for England, brought across the sea "place-hunters" and ambitious men, craving money and dignities;[1] and this introduction of the Norman was the first link of a chain of events which led to the entire subversion of England, and afforded an opportunity for William of Normandy to lay claim to the throne, which he obtained by art and force of arms.[2]

Two persons had come over to England in the train of Emma, who were destined to act a prominent part in her eventful career, and had been received with great honour by Ethelred. These were Hugh and Alwyn, both Normans by birth. The latter was of high rank, being a relative of the ducal family, and accordingly had escorted the young Queen in the capacity of "counsellor or guardian."[3] On his arrival he was made superintendent of the royal household, and created Earl of Southampton. The courage and fidelity of Alwyn were afterwards of great service to Ethelred during his wars against the Danes; and at a later period still his history becomes involved more particularly with that of Queen Emma, to whose fortunes he ever remained a firm and tried friend. Hugh, the other Norman attendant on the Queen, was, at her request, created Governor of Exeter,[4] with the title of Earl of Devonshire. Emma

[1] Thierry's Norman Conquest. [2] Holinshed.
[3] Milner. [4] Caradoc, Fabian, Saxon Chronicle.

herself was "Lady" of Exeter. He does not appear to have been equally faithful, to judge by the events which followed.

In the year succeeding that of Emma's marriage and the Danish massacre, Exeter was besieged by King Sweyn (A.D. 1003); for that Ethelred had privately put to death all the Danes in the several cities of England, had reached the ears of the brother of the injured Gunilda, who, at the head of a great navy, landed in Cornwall, burning with rage and indignation. Exeter bravely sustained a siege from the Danes for the space of two months, but at the end of that time was finally taken "by the treachery of Hugh, its governor, the Queen's countryman." On the surrender of the city, Sweyn put all to fire and sword, and razed it to the ground, besides taking great plunder.[1]

Turketil, at that period, describing the condition of the English to Sweyn, says, "a country illustrious and powerful; a king asleep, solicitous only about women and wine, and trembling at war; *hated by his people*, and derided by strangers; generals envious of each other; and weak governors, ready to fly at the first shout of battle."[2] It is said of Elfric, a Saxon bishop of that time, that "he considered the state of things so bad that he believed doom's day to be approaching, and the world very near its end."[3]

About this time, Emma was called to be present at a very affecting and remarkable scene, peculiarly charac-

[1] Exeter was afterwards restored by Canute, but appears to have been still attached to the Queens of England; for after the Conquest, we find it holding out against William, under Githa, the mother of Harold.

[2] Malmsbury; Kemble's Saxons in Britain. [3] Turner.

teristic of the superstition of the times. The Queen had already become mother of one son by Ethelred, to whom the name of Alfred had been given, and she was a second time about to give birth to a child, who afterwards wore the crown under the title of Edward the Confessor. The great rapidity and progress of the conquests of the Danes, owing to the pusillanimous and tardy conduct of Ethelred, justly surnamed "the Unready," from being never prepared to face his foes, caused a great council to be held, to deliberate on the affairs of the kingdom, then nearly overrun by the enemy. On this occasion, Queen Emma was present; and Ethelred, being desirous of appointing a successor, requested the opinion of the council. Some recommended Edmond "Ironside," son of his first Queen, so surnamed on account of his bodily strength, while others gave the preference to Alfred, the son of Emma, still in his infancy: yet, it having been predicted by one of the assembly that the former should enjoy but a very short life, and that the latter should perish immaturely, the wishes of all concentred on the child of which the Queen was then pregnant; and the King, assenting to this election, the nobility took an oath of fealty to the unborn babe.[1] In the first compartment of the screen which adorns the chapel of King Edward the Confessor, at Westminster, this subject is represented. In this piece of sculpture Queen Emma appears standing in the midst of a large assembly, with her left hand upon her waist. All the figures appear to have the right arm extended upwards, as if in the act of swearing allegiance.[2]

[1] Life of Edward the Confessor; Neale's Westminster Abbey.
[2] Neale.

Emma gave birth to her son Edward at Islip, in Oxfordshire, and the second compartment of the before-mentioned screen in the chapel of St. Edward represents the event. It is curious on account of its containing in sculpture the ancient form of a state-bed:[1] in the back-ground are two of the Queen's attendants with the infant prince in their arms. At a subsequent period, Edward the Confessor received the town which had been the scene of his nativity, from his mother, Queen Emma, for his own maintenance; and long after, when he came to the throne, he bestowed that place, among other royal gifts, on the Abbey of Westminster, so that it became the country-residence first of the abbots, and then of the deans of Westminster. In Edward's original charter, he speaks of it in terms thus translated:[2] "Edward, king, greeteth Wlsy, bishop, and Gyrth, earl, and all my nobles in Oxfordshire. And I tell you that I have given to Christ and St. Peter at Westminster, *that small village wherein I was born*, by name GITHSLEPE,[3] and one hide at Mersie, scot-free and rent-free, with all the things which belong thereunto, in wood and field, in meadows and waters, with church and with the immunities of the church, as fully and as largely, and as free, as it stood in mine own hand; and also as my mother Emma, upon my right of

[1] A bed, of a very simple construction, is exhibited in Strutt's Saxon Antiquities, plate 13, fig. 2. It seems to be nothing more than a thick boarded bottom; the covering is very thin, and the pillow stiff and hard; in short, from the view of the whole together, ease was but little considered. This (though so rude in appearance), being a royal bed, is ornamented with curtains, which are fastened to the top, but they had also others that slid with rings on an iron rod.

[2] Kennett's Parochial Antiquities.

[3] Islip.

primogeniture, for my maintenance, gave it me entire, and bequeathed it to the family." [1]

Emma and her children had been sent to the Isle of Wight for safety, from Winchester, which was threatened with destruction by the advancing army of Sweyn; Ethelred himself remaining in London, in a state of inactivity and apprehension, neither daring to assemble or to lead an army against his enemies, "lest the nobles of his realm, who had been unjustly treated by him, should desert him in the battle, and give him up to the vengeance of his foes." Tormented by these distressing apprehensions, the wretched King secretly withdrew from the city of London, and arriving at Southampton,

[1] The King appears to have claimed the power, not only of disposing of the benefice or fee after the death of the tenant, but also of controlling the distribution of his other possessions. Hence the vassal in his will was always anxious to obtain the confirmation of his superior, and to make provision for the payment of what was termed by the Saxons the *heriot*, by the Normans the *relief*." Elphelm, after leaving his heriot to the King, concludes his will in these words: "And now I beseech thee, my beloved lord, that my last testament may stand, and that thou do not permit it to be annulled."

The heriot was to be paid "within twelve months from the death of the last possessor; and was apportioned to the rank which he bore in the State."* The payment preserved the estate in his family, if he died intestate, or was remitted in case of his falling in battle in his lord's service. In the stormy season of Ethelred's warfare against the Danes, and probably with a view to the future welfare of her children, in the event of her quitting England for her brother's protection, Emma adopted this precaution. The heriot, or bequest of Queen Elfgifa, in 1012, we are told, was as follows:—"She left the King six horses, six shields, six spears, one cup, two rings, worth one hundred and twenty mancuses each, and various lands."

The word *heriot* signifies "habiliments of war," and Canute was the first who established the compulsory heriot in England.

* Lingard, Sir H. Ellis, &c.

crossed over to the Isle of Wight, whence he dispatched Queen Emma, with his two sons Alfred and Edward, and their guardians Elfhun, Bishop of Durham, and Elfsey, Abbot of Peterborough, into Normandy to Duke Richard her brother, who received them with honour and respect. Eadric, too, King Ethelred's kinsman, crossed over with the Queen, and a hundred and forty soldiers, and resided with her two years, attending her with great state. They crossed the sea in the month of August.[1] The Bishop of London also accompanied the Queen and her family as their protector.[2] The royal party carried with them the treasures of Ethelred, either for security, or to obtain, through their medium, assistance from the Duke, in the recovery of their kingdom;[3] among other valuables, Queen Emma took with her, "an incomparable copy of the Gospels, such as had never before been seen in Normandy," which she presented to the Church of St. Peter.[4]

Having obtained a favourable reception for herself,[5]

[1] Roger of Wendover, Fabian, Ran. Higden.

[2] "And the King sent Bishop Elfhun, with the Ethelings Edward and Alfred, over sea, that he might have charge of them."—Roger of Wendover.

[3] Echard. [4] Jumièges.

[5] Rouen, the residence of the ducal family, "was anciently called Ruda or Rudaburg; whence the Earls of Normandy were called Ruda-jarlar, the Rouen Earls, not Earls of Normandy." During the period that Emma resided abroad, with her brother, Elfsy, Abbot of Peterborough, "who was there with her, went to the minster which is called Boneval, where St. Florentine's body lay. There found he a poor place, a poor abbot, and poor monks; for they had been plundered. Then bought he there, of the abbot and of the monks, St. Florentine's body, all except the head, for five hundred pounds; and then, when he came home again, then made he an offering of it to Christ and St. Peter."—Saxon Chronicle, Milton Laing's Notes on Snorro.

and ascertained the friendly disposition of her relatives towards Ethelred, Queen Emma persuaded her husband to throw himself on the hospitality of his Norman neighbours. Accordingly, "when King Ethelred heard of the honourable reception they had met with, he followed himself in the month of January, and laid all his troubles before the noble Duke, who much compassioned his calamities, and soothed his grief with words of consolation."[1]

Some authors relate that Ethelred, and Edmund "Ironside," secretly embarked at the same time as the Queen, and personally escorted her to the home of her youth.[2] The Saxon Chronicle, however, which calls Emma "the Lady," states that, after her departure to Normandy, the King left the fleet[3] at mid-winter, and went to the Isle of Wight, "and was there during that tide; and after that tide, he went over the sea to Richard, and was there with him until such times as Sweyn was dead." The same record places Emma's visit to Normandy, in 1013. Ethelred was very splendidly entertained by his generous brother-in-law.

On the death of Sweyn, the people recalled Ethelred, although the fleet, and also the Danes, had elected Canute as his father's successor. Ethelred, with his usual *unreadiness* to avail himself of fortune's favours, would not venture to England till his son Edmund Ironside, whom he sent over to ascertain the disposition of the people, had returned, when having been informed that, "if he would make haste" all things were favourable, he departed for England, with certain succours afforded by the brother of Queen Emma.

[1] Roger of Wendover. [2] Harding.
[3] Which lay in the Thames.

The people testified great joy at his return, and Ethelred, on his part, swore new allegiance to them, and promised to reform his administration. The return of Emma to England could not have been productive of much comfort to her at this time, when the greater part of the country was, as in the reign of Alfred the Great, overrun by the Danes. In spite of promises, hopes and aspirations for better things, nothing seems to have prospered.

Famine, pestilence, and war, distinguished the unfortunate reign of Ethelred, and taxation burthened the people. The year of the King's return was marked not only by a renewal of the war, but by another unlooked-for event. "On the eve of St. Michael's mass, came the great sea-flood wide thoughout this land, and ran so far up as it never before had done, and washed away many towns, and a countless number of people."[1] But adversity, thus poured forth in full measure on the sovereign head, failed in its effect, and Ethelred was still oppressive, weak, and irresolute; thus, though at the head of a powerful army, he was unable to maintain his royal rights; his son Edmund could not even prevail on him to head his troops in person. The weak King, even feigned illness, as an excuse for remaining in London, where he alone fancied himself to be secure.

On his return, Ethelred had ordered the army, which lay at Greenwich, to be paid 21,000*l.*,[2] and sent a general invitation to all who would enter his service. Many flocked around him, and among the rest "came King Olaf, with a great troop of Northmen, to his aid." Of this great leader, it is said that "he had in his ship 100 men armed in coats of ringmail, and in foreign

[1] Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. [2] Ibid., Snorro.

nelmets. The most of his men had white shields, on which the holy cross was gilt; but some had painted it in blue or red. He had also had the cross painted in front on all the helmets, in a pale colour. He had a white banner, on which was a serpent figured." The dress of Olaf must have been costly, for mention is made of a present he received from Princess Ingegerd, of a long cloak of fine linen, richly embroidered with gold and with silk points.[1]

One of the most interesting portions of national British history relating to this period, is contained in Snorro's Sea-Kings of Norway, and as it gives a picture of the intestine discord of London at that time, and also of the city itself, it may not be ill-timed to introduce it here. King Olaf and others having joined Ethelred, the Chronicle proceeds to state that "they steered first to London, and sailed into the Thames with their fleet; but the Danes had a castle within. On the other side of the river is a great trading-place, which is called *Sudeviki*.[2] There the Danes raised a great work, dug large ditches, and within had built a bulwark of stone, timber, and turf, where they had stationed a strong army. King Ethelred ordered a great assault; but the Danes defended themselves bravely, and King Ethelred could make nothing of it. Between the castle and Southwark there was a bridge so broad that two waggons could pass each other upon it. "On the bridge were raised barricades, both towers and wooden parapets, in the direction of the river, which were nearly breast high, and under the bridge were piles

[1] *Silki-rœmor* appear to have been silk tassels or ties on the cloak of fine linen (pelli), which was embroidered with gold.—Laing's Notes on Snorro.

[2] Or Southwark.

driven into the bottom of the river. Now, when the attack was made, the troops stood on the bridge everywhere, and defended themselves. King Ethelred was very anxious to get possession of the bridge, and he called together all the chiefs to consult how they should get the bridge broken down. Then said King Olaf, he would attempt to lay his fleet alongside of it, if the other ships would do the same. It was then determined in this council that they should lay their war forces under the bridge; and each made himself ready with ships and men.

"King Olaf ordered great platforms of floating wood to be tied together with hazel-bands, and for this he took down old houses; and with these, as a roof, he covered over his ships so widely, that it reached over the ship's sides. Under this screen he set pillars so high and stout, that there both was room for swinging their swords, and the roofs were strong enough to withstand the stones cast down upon them. Now when the fleet and men were ready, they rowed up along the river; but when they came near the bridge, there were cast down upon them so many stones and missile weapons, such as arrows and spears, that neither helmet nor shield could withstand it; and the ships themselves were so greatly damaged, that many retreated out of it. But King Olaf, and the Northmen's fleet with him, rowed quite up under the bridge, laid their cables round the piles which supported it, and then rowed off with all the ships as far as they could down the stream. The piles were thus shaken in bottom, and were loosened under the bridge. Now as the armed troops stood thick of men upon the bridge, and there were likewise many heaps of stones and other weapons upon it, and

the piles under it being loosened and broken, the bridge gave way; and a great part of the men upon it fell into the river, and all the others fled, some into the castle, some into Southwark. Thereafter Southwark was stormed and taken. Now when the people in the castle saw that the river Thames was mastered, and that they could not hinder the passage of ships up into the country, they became afraid, surrendered the tower, and took Ethelred to be their King. So says Otta Swarte:—

'London Bridge is broken down,—
Gold is won, and bright renown,
Shields resounding,
War-horns sounding,
Hildur[1] shouting in the din!
Arrows singing,
Mail-coats ringing—
Odin makes our Olaf win!'

"And he also composed these:—

'King Ethelred has found a friend:
Brave Olaf will his throne defend—
In bloody fight
Maintain his right,
Win back his land
With blood-red hand,
And Edmund's son upon his throne replace—
Edmund, the star of every royal race!'

"Sigvat also relates as follows:—

'At London Bridge stout Olaf gave
Odin's law to his war-men brave—
'To win or die!'
And their foemen fly;
Some by the dyke-side refuge gain,
Some in their tents on Southwark plain!
This sixth attack
Brought victory back.'"

[1] The Scandinavian Bellona.

Olaf passed that winter with Ethelred, to whom all the country far around was brought into subjection; but the Thingmen[1] and the Danes held many castles, besides a great part of the country. Olaf was commander of the King's forces when they took Canterbury, where many were killed and the castle burnt: this is reckoned his eighth battle: he was also entrusted with the whole land defence of England, according to the Chronicle of Snorro, and sailed round the coast with his ships of war. After another battle against the Danes at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, Olaf scoured the country, "taking scott of the people, and plundering where it was refused. So says Ottar:—

'The English race could not resist thee,
With money thou madest them assist thee;
Unsparingly thou madest them pay
A scott to thee in every way:
Money, if money could be got—
Goods, cattle, household gear, if not.
Thy gathered spoil, borne to the strand,
Was the best wealth of English land.'

So that the friends of Ethelred were no more the friends of the English people than his enemies, and a woful season was his reign for them all."

Olaf remained in England for three years. The country was in a most pitiable condition, and if men could hardly feel themselves safe upon even a throne, how much more unprotected was the position of the other sex. It is hard to say what kind of court was that of

[1] Thingmen were hired men-at-arms, employed at the Danish court as a body-guard for their sovereigns. They formed bodies of standing troops over levies of peasantry, and to their superiority the victories of Sweyn and Canute have been ascribed.—Laing's Note on Snorro's Sea-Kings.

Queen Emma at this troubled period of her life. With her young children forced from place to place, she still braved her fate with fortitude, and generously strove to animate the drooping spirits of her too desponding husband. It must have been to her a bitter and painful season, to behold the fierce strife maintained between the party of a husband such as Ethelred, and the countrymen of her mother, to whom she felt a preference; and had she been placed at the helm, probably the destiny of England had been very different to what it was. Ethelred's cowardice and extortions ruined his cause, and involved both himself and his family in ruin. There was, however, one of the sons of Ethelred whose bravery redeemed his father's character, though not his fortunes; and this was Edmund "Ironside," who comes into notice in a remarkable transaction about this period, A.D. 1015.

In those times of civil strife and warfare, the gift of female beauty was too often dangerous to its possessor, and many a high-born damsel and lofty princess was glad to enshrine herself from public gaze, in the quiet and safe seclusion of a monastery, preferring rather to forsake the world, than to risk the dangers she would inevitably be exposed to on every side, whether Saxon or Danish. Such, though frequently the case, was not the reason of the beautiful Algitha having become the inmate of the Abbey of Malmesbury. She had been sent there as a prisoner, by orders of Ethelred.

Algitha, a lady of noble parentage and great beauty, was the wife of Sigeferth, a nobleman of Danish extraction, who enjoyed extensive territories in Northumberland. The avaricious Ethelred coveted these rich possessions, and for the purpose of seizing on the Earl's

estates, resolved to accomplish his death. Accordingly, the King convened a council at Oxford, A.D. 1015, in which Sigeferth, and another noble Danish lord, were accused of a conspiracy by Edric Streone, the King's favourite counsellor, the assembly being composed of Danes as well as English; yet was the motive of the King in the matter very evident. The unfortunate nobles were betrayed into confidence, and put to death in the King's own chamber. Their servants were so exasperated, that they would have revenged their murder, had they not been overpowered, and compelled to retreat to the Church of St. Frideswide, where they took refuge in the steeple, and defended themselves, until that being set on fire, they perished in the flames.[1]

On this melancholy occasion Algitha had been her husband's companion to Oxford, and on his death was seized and forcibly conveyed to Malmesbury under the royal mandate. The beauty of the widow of Sigeferth was, however, so noted, and the nobleness of her disposition so well known, that Prince Edmund was induced, from curiosity to become acquainted with her, to feign business in the neighbourhood of Malmesbury. In an interview with Algitha he fell deeply in love, and resolved to make her his wife. The match, as might have been expected, was strongly opposed by Ethelred, the lady being in his own power, and her rich possessions under his control; but the paternal prohibition did not deter Edmund from carrying off and espousing the lady of his choice, an event of great importance to the after-history of England. On his marriage, Edmund required his father to cede the territories of Sigeferth, in Northumberland, which amounted

[1] Holinshed.

to the living of an earl. On the King's refusal, Edmund, without his authority, went into Northumberland, where the farmers and tenants of Sigeferth's estates willingly received him as their lord, influenced by his union with Algitha. This event embittered the close of Ethelred's career. The King survived his son's marriage scarcely twelve months, during which he not only beheld his eldest son and destined heir thus rebel against him, but his enemies triumphant. After frequently feigning illness as one excuse among many to evade his foes, domestic trouble and vexation at repeated losses caused the King to fall dangerously sick in earnest, and he died at the age of fifty, after a reign of thirty-seven years. His last remains were interred in St. Paul's, London, where they were seen by Speed before the destruction of the church, who says "his bones yet remain in the north wall of the chancel, in a chest of grey marble, reared on four small pillars, and covered with a coped stone of the same."

Ethelred had a numerous family: Edmund "Ironside" and Edwy, with their three sisters, all born by this King's first marriage, survived him; and Alfred, Edward, and Goda, the children of Emma.

Popular consent, and the late king's will, accorded the crown to Edmund Ironside, who was accordingly crowned with the usual honours at St. Paul's, the ceremony being performed by the Archbishop of York. Canute, notwithstanding, caused himself to be proclaimed at Southampton, and not long after besieged Edmund in London.

Within the city at this critical moment were Edmund and his brother, the Queen-Dowager Emma, two bishops, and several distinguished thanes. An army

of 27,000 men and a fleet of 340 sail had been collected in the mouth of the Thames. Canute found it easy to cut off the communication by land, but to prevent ingress and egress by water was more difficult. As the fortifications of the bridge impeded the navigation of the river, by dint of labour a channel was dug on the right bank. Through it was dragged a considerable number of ships, and the Northmen became masters of the Thames above as well as below the city.[1] While thus situated every means was tried to gain over the besieged. Canute demanded that Edmund and his brother should be given up, that 15,000*l.* should be paid for the ransom of the Queen, 12,000*l.* for that of the bishops, and that 300 hostages should be given for the fidelity of the citizens. If these terms were accepted, he would take them under his protection; if they were refused, the city should be abandoned to pillage and the flames.[2] But the brave Londoners held out, and the Danes were forced to retire. The royal brothers had escaped in a boat through the Danish fleet. Several encounters followed, and also a second siege of the city, which was relieved by Edmund, who entered London in triumph. The war was, after a truce, terminated by a friendly compact. The two kings had agreed to meet each other in single combat in the isle of Olney, near Gloucester, where after a few blows the rival monarchs shook hands and agreed to divide the kingdom, Canute receiving from Edmund the northern half of England.[3]

On the death of Ethelred Queen Emma had recalled King Olaf to England to assist her against Canute, but on a peace concluded between Edmund and the Danish

[1] Chronicles of London Bridge. [2] Holinshed. [3] Lingard.

monarch, Olaf soon withdrew, and was created King of Norway by the voice of the people. Queen Emma also, who was stepmother of "Ironside," fled for the second time into Normandy, taking with her the young princes Alfred and Edward.[1]

The Danish chronicler says that the murder of Edmund took place about a month after his agreement with Canute, who thus became master of the remaining half of the island, and took care to render permanent a power he had obtained only by repeated efforts.

Olaf, after the battle of London Bridge, spent two summers and a winter in France, and after the death of King Edmund in 1016 came to Rouen, where he met the sons of Ethelred, and entered into an engagement to assist them the following year in the recovery of their kingdom, for which he was to be rewarded with Northumberland if the enterprise was successful. This invasion was attempted, but was a failure, and the Princes were compelled to return to Rouen. There is no doubt that Emma not only sanctioned these efforts made by her sons to recover their rights, but also assisted them as far as was in her power.

Sigvat the Scald writes thus:—

> "Now all the sons of Ethelred
> Were either fallen or had fled;
> Some slain by Canute,—some, they say,
> To save their lives had run away."

Canute rightly deemed an alliance with their mother herself would most effectually silence the future claims of Ethelred's heirs. His own wife was just dead, and he determined to offer himself to the widow of Ethelred. As Emma was of Danish descent he supposed she

[1] Turner, Gaillard.

would naturally prefer a Dane to an Anglo-Saxon for a husband, and he desired to secure the alliance of the Duke in his own favour, who had up to this time befriended the sons of his sister, the Queen of England. The young Princes having heard of the death of Edmund, and Canute's cruelty to their two young cousins, the sons of that King had resolved to remain at the court of Normandy; but Richard had fitted out a fleet in support of their claims. However, Canute dispatched his embassy to the Norman Duke. Messengers, with right royal gifts and earnest supplications, proceeded to the court of Richard, with instructions to demand Emma of her brother, and at the same time to offer one of Canute's own sisters, named Estrech, or Estritha,[1] to the Duke.[2]

It occasioned great wonder among many persons that Emma should agree to marry the mortal enemy of her first husband and of her young sons. Not long before, Canute himself had besieged London while Emma was within its walls, and now she accorded him her hand in marriage; yet not only did the Duke, her brother, consent, but took for his own wife the Lady Estritha. Some writers estimate Emma's conduct in this instance as very politic, for not only did she insure the succession to her own children, but effectually silenced the Danes. Had Emma been indifferent to the future welfare of her sons Alfred and Edward, she would have brought them over with her to England; but her anxiety for their safety caused her to prevent their leaving the Norman court; for she dreaded the jealousy of Canute, which had been excited by the vain endeavours of Duke Richard to place those princes on the throne of their ancestors; added to this, Edwy, brother of Edmund, had fallen a

[1] Sometimes written Ostrich. [2] Lingard.

victim, and the young sons of Ironside had been sent to a foreign land.

By the agreement made with Canute, Emma did not take away her son's right, but removed it to a greater distance by interposing her own issue by Canute; so that after the death of the usurper Harold Harefoot, Hardicanute succeeded as rightful heir by virtue of Emma's agreement, and being established on the throne, ordained his brother Edward his successor. By Emma's policy the Danes were thus wholly excluded, and the English line restored, through a match beneficial both to herself and her family. In making this alliance she would appear to have acted as guardian of the young princes, and to have considered expediency with a view to the ultimate result. Such is the view taken in the work entitled "Encomium Emmæ," which was written by a monk contemporary with Emma, and as the title imports, in commendation of the Norman Princess.

The two marriages of Emma to Canute, and of Canute's sister, Estreth, to Duke Richard, were solemnized at the same time (in the month of July, 1018),[1] with vast magnificence. The two years of Emma's widowhood must have about expired when she became a second time a bride; for Edmund's reign had lasted eighteen months, and a few months had elapsed after the accession of Canute before the ceremony took place. According to Jumièges, Emma was married to Canute "Christiano more," in the Christian form, so that, prior to that marriage, he appears to have been a Pagan following the Danish rites. That this was really the case appears from Ordericus Vitalis, one of the most accurate and valuable of the Norman historians. We know that

[1] Turner, Gaillard, Higden, Fabian, Roger of Wendover.

Emma was a Christian herself, and from Ordericus learn that "Canute was made a Christian, and married Emma to preserve peace." The ceremony seems to have taken place at London a few days after her arrival, and on the occasion the Danish King, fearing she would be carried away by the Saxon soldiery, presented to the whole army "her weight in gold and silver."[1] By this marriage Canute gained the alliance of Duke Richard, though for a short time only, for he did not long survive his union with Estritha, and at the death of this prince his duchy devolved on his eldest son, who died in another year, childless, and after him to Robert, his brother, a man of valour and abilities.

The English were pleased to find at court a sovereign to whom they were accustomed; they greatly loved Emma, and as the widow of Ethelred she had naturally a claim upon them. Harding writes:—

> "Kyng Knowt reigned in Englâd the anon,
> And wedded had Queen Eme of England,
> Ethelrede wife, which gate him loue anon
> In Englande of all the estates of the londe,
> Of cómous also that were both fre and bonde."

"Acting as mediatrix between Canute and the English nation, Emma counselled her husband to send back his fleet[2] and his stipendiary soldiers to their own

[1] Jamièges.

[2] In dismissing the Danish army and navy by request of his Queen, the King reserved for his own use forty vessels only, the crew or Thingmanen of which were intended for his body-guard. Edgar the Peaceable is thought to have kept his foes at a distance by the display of a fleet of 3,600 vessels, which each summer he employed to sail round the provinces he ruled. Before Canute's time the Danes had open barques with twelve oars; they afterwards enlarged these so that they contained more than 100 men. Canute's

country.[1] 'Accordingly, after distributing among them 82,000 pounds of silver, he dismissed them to their native land."[2] This was an important concession, and betokened how great was the influence the Queen had already obtained over the heart of Canute.

The King of Norway and Denmark from the earliest period kept a "herd" or "court." "The herdmen were paid men-at-arms," who mounted guard at stated hours, posted sentries round the King's quarters, and had patrols on horseback, night and day, at some distance, to bring notice of any hostile advance. They were of two classes, udal-born to land, and called thingmen, from their being privileged to sit in *Things* at home, and those of a commoner class, *not* udal-born to land, and therefore unqualified, such as ordinary seamen, soldiers, and followers, but yet not of the class called slaves in England. The victories of Canute and his father are chiefly ascribed "to the superiority of the hired bands of thingmen in their pay. The massacre of the Danes, in 1002, by Ethelred, appears to have been of the regular bands of thingmen, who were quartered in the towns, and who were attacked while unarmed and attending a church festival. The herdmen appear not only to have been disciplined and paid troops, but to have been clothed uniformly. Red was always

ships were covered over with gold and silver. They had one mast, on the top of which was a gilt vane, exhibiting some bird, to show which way the wind blew. Sometimes a man, a fish, a dragon, or a lion ornamented the stern of the vessel.—William of Malmesbury.

[1] The presence of the Danish army was a constant source of uneasiness and animosity to the English; but gratitude as well as policy forbade Canute to dismiss it without a liberal donation.—Lingard.

[2] Roger of Wendover, Turner.

the national colour of the Northmen, and continues still in Denmark and England the distinctive colour of their military dress. It was so of the herdmen and people of distinction in Norway, as appears from several parts of the Sagas, in the eleventh century."[1]

The dresses of the Danish kings were grand and magnificent, though not much unlike those of the Saxons, embroidered and worked with broad gold trimming. They had either a cloak or a robe, also resembling the Saxons, sometimes buckled over the right shoulder, and hanging on the left, and sometimes buckling on the middle of the breast; the cloak hung over the left shoulder of the King, without being buckled on the right at all, by way of distinction. They wore shoes, and also a kind of buskin, the toe of which was turned somewhat downward.

As early as the time of Edgar, the Danes who had settled in England were great beaux, constantly combing their hair, of which they were very fond.[2]

Canute himself is described as "large in stature and very powerful, fair, and distinguished for his beauty; his nose was thin, prominent and aquiline; his hair was profuse, his eyes bright and fierce."[3] His many great and good qualities obtained for him various sur-

[1] Laing; Preliminary Dissertation to Snorro, Chronicle of the Kings of Norway.

[2] "The Danish mercenaries in England combed their hair once a day, bathed once a week, and changed their clothes frequently. A young warrior, going to be beheaded, begged of his executioner that his hair might not be touched by a slave, or stained with his blood; and Harold, surnamed Harfager, or "Fair Locks," made a vow to his mistress to neglect his fine hair until he had completed the conquest of Norway to gain her love."—Lingard.

[3] Saga.

names, such as the Brave, the Great, the Rich, and the Pious.[1]

The Danish manners and customs had been common in England long before, so that a Danish court would not occasion much astonishment among the Anglo-Saxons. Amongst the Danes themselves some court ceremonies, unknown before, had been introduced by Olaf Kyrre, or "the Quiet." "For each guest at the royal table he appointed a torchbearer, to hold a candle. The butler stood in front of the King's table to fill the cups, which, we are told, before his time were of deer's horn. The court-marshal had a table opposite to the King's, for entertaining guests of inferior dignity. The drinking was either by measure or without measure; that is, in each horn or cup there was a perpendicular row of studs at equal distances, and each guest, when the cup or horn was passed to him, drank down to the stud or mark below. At night, and on particular occasions, the drinking was without measure, each taking what he pleased; and to be drunk at night appears to have been common even for the kings. Such cups, with studs, are still preserved in museums, and in families on the Borders.[2]

[1] Turner.

[2] Until a few years since, the manor of Pusey, in Berkshire, has belonged to a family of the same name, their ancestor having received it from that king by the medium of a HORN, which bears the following inscription:—

"Kynge Knowd geve Wyilyam Pewse
Hys Horn to holde by the Londe."

This curious relic of antiquity is of a dark-brown tortoiseshell colour, mounted at each end with rings of silver, and a third round the middle, on which the inscription is written in characters of much later date than those of the time of Canute. The horn is of an ox

"The kings appear to have wanted no external ceremonial belonging to their dignity: they were addressed in forms, still preserved in the northern languages, of peculiar respect; their personal attendants were of the highest people, and were considered as holding places of great honour. Earl Magnus, the saint, was in his youth, one of those who carried in the dishes to the royal table; and torch-bearers, herdmen, and all who belonged to the court, were in great consideration; and it appears to have been held of importance and of great advantage to be enrolled among the King's herdmen."[1]

There were many sorts of amusements in the Dano-English court: chess and dice are named among the rest. Bishop Ethern coming to Canute the Great about midnight, upon urgent business, found the King and his courtiers engaged at play, some at dice and others at chess.[2] Backgammon is reported to have been invented about this period in Wales, and derives its name from *bach* (little) and *cammon* (battle).

Canute patronised men of literary merit, being liberal to the clergy and the Scalds: of the latter class the names and verses of many have been preserved, who are quoted by Snorro. An amusing anecdote is on

or buffalo; two feet are fixed to the middle ring, and the stopper is shaped like a dog's head. The length of the horn is two feet and half an inch; its greatest circumference one foot. The person to whom the horn was originally given is said, by tradition, to have been an officer in Canute's army, who had informed his sovereign of an ambuscade formed by the Saxons to intercept him, and received the manor in reward for his intelligence.—Britton and Brayley.

This interesting heirloom was produced at the recent anniversary of Alfred's birth.

[1] Introductory Dissertation on Snorro, Laing. [2] Turner.

record of Thorarin, who had made a short poem on Canute, and went to recite it in his presence. "On approaching the throne, he received a salute, and respectfully inquired, if he might repeat what he had composed. The King was at table at the close of a repast: but a crowd of petitioners were occupying their sovereign's ear by a statement of their grievances. The impatient poet may have thought them unusually loquacious; he bore the tedious querulousness of injury with less patience than the King, and at last, presuming on his general favour with the great, exclaimed, 'Let me request again, Sire, that you would listen to my song; it will not consume much of your time, for it is very short.' The King, angry at the petulant urgency of the salutation, answered with a stern look, 'Are you not ashamed to do what none but yourself has dared, to write a *short* poem upon me! Unless by to-morrow's dinner you produce above thirty strophes, on the same subject, your head shall pay the penalty.' The poet retired, not with alarm, for his genius disdained that, but with some mortification at the public rebuke. He invoked the Scandinavian muses, his mind became fluent, verses crowded on it; and before the allotted time, he stood before the King with the exacted poem, and received fifty marks of pure silver as his reward."[1]

The beautiful manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxons have already been alluded to. Fosbrooke assigns two motives for the extraordinary pains taken in their illustrations: "one that perusal might be thus invited, the other, that they might be presents of value. Ervenius, an Anglo-Saxon, was very skilful in writing and illumination. He committed two books, the Sacramental

[1] Turner's Anglo-Saxon.

and the Psalter, in which he had decorated the principal letters with gold, to the care of Wulstan when a boy. Admiration of the workmanship invited Wulstan to a studious perusal. But Ervenius consulting the advantage of the age, as affirmed, with the hope of greater reward, presented the Sacramental to Canute, and the Psalter to Emma his Queen."[1]

One of the royal residences[2] of Canute and Emma, was a house or palace in Westminster, which was burnt down in the reign of the Confessor,[3] but their principal abode was the palace, which at that time adjoined St. Paul's, and Canute endowed the office of its Dean with the plot of ground contiguous to the Cathedral, now called the Deanery, and also a valuable estate at Chadwell. The chronicler Knyghton relates that it was in the gardens of this city-palace, declining, with a gentle slope, towards the banks of the river, that the well-known incident occurred of the king's reproof to his impious and scarcely half-Christianized courtiers. But Milner considers this to be a mistake, and says that Rudborne, who quotes more ancient authors, places this scene near the ancient Southampton, now the port of Northam.[4] The identical spot where the transaction took place, is still pointed out at Bittern, in Northam harbour by the tradition of the inhabitants; the legend though well-known, is here given. "King Canute

[1] British Monachism.

[2] Raby Castle, the seat of the Earl of Darlington, about a mile to the north of Stamdrop, is supposed to occupy the site of a former mansion of Canute, given by him to the Church of Stamdrop. It stands on an eminence, founded on a rock, and is surrounded with a parapet and embrasured wall, together with a deep fosse.—Hutchinson.

[3] Fenn's Letters.

[4] Milner's Hist. of Winchester.

having walked one day to the sea-shore, attended by a train of courtiers, some sycophants began to address him in the courtly language of adulation, exalted his dominion, and pronounced him the most powerful and most happy of human beings; nay, they even had the boldness to add:—"Sire! nothing can resist you, nothing is impossible to your greatness."

Canute, disgusted with this fulsome flattery, ordered a chair to be brought which he placed on the beach at low water. He then seated himself and exclaimed,—"Sea, thou art mine! and these sands acknowledge my sovereignty. I charge thee, therefore, rise no farther, nor presume to wet the feet of thy master." The waves, however, obeying no laws but those of the Almighty, pursued their course, and dashed against the King, upon which he rose from his chair, exclaiming, "Let all the inhabitants of the earth know, that the power of man is vain and contemptible, and that He only is a monarch at whose nod the heavens, the earth, and the sea, are ever obedient."[1]

This reproof sufficiently disconcerted the parasites, but Canute embraced another and more solemn occasion to acknowledge his sincere submission to the Almighty God, his Lord and Sovereign: he deposited the golden crown which he had been accustomed to wear, in the church at Winchester, and never afterwards placed it on his own head.

There yet exist coins of this King,[2] which were struck at Dublin, probably in acknowledgment of his

[1] Great and Good Deeds of the Danes.

[2] While this work is going through the press the newspapers of the day describe the finding by workmen of no less than one hundred and twenty coins of Canute and some of his predecessors, in a perfect

power by the Danish settlers in that country. The portraits of Canute and Emma, were prefixed to a Saxon MS. register of Hyde Abbey, written during that monarch's reign. This antique and valuable document is now in the possession of Thomas Astell, Esq.,

state of preservation, at Wedmore, in Somersetshire. The labourers who found the earthen vessel in which they were contained, were digging for gravel in the churchyard.

"No king," says Gough in his Catalogue, "ever coined in so many places as Canute." He mentions no less than thirty-seven.

A Danish medalist has observed that no coins of Canute are to be met with of any other than English mints; notwithstanding he reigned two years longer in his own country than over England, which he governed nineteen years. This observation seems to be confirmed by the discovery of some of this Prince's coins of English mintage, with others of our King Ethelred, in a barrow in Ireland, mentioned by Olaus Wormius. England might be his favourite residence, as he had made it so considerable an accession to his paternal territory by compact and succession; and he affected to court the good will of his new subjects, by taking the title of "Rex Anglorum," and sinking his other title.

Keder has noted four varieties of this Prince's coins.

The first exhibits his bust in armour, with a helmet or diadem; in his left hand the sceptre surmounted by a lily. The cross is a quatrefoil with pellets at the corners, or with another kind of cross laid upon it.

2. The bust has the diadem or sceptre which on some is surmounted by four pellets in form of a cross. The cross issues from a circle in the centre.

3. The bust in a quatrefoil, with a crown of fleurs-de-lis; the cross terminating in crescents, in a quatrefoil, with three pellets on the points.

4. The bust wearing a high pointed cap or helmet; the sceptre surmounted with three pellets. The cross in a circle, in the angles four rings enclosing a less.

A fifth sort has an arm to the bust.

A sixth has the bust helmeted in a quatrefoil.*

* Catalogue of the Coins of Canute, by Richard Gough.

by whose permission portraits alluded to were copied by Mr. Strutt for his work on Saxon Antiquities.[1]

Canute has been celebrated for his justice and equity, and doubtless his religious feelings, which prompted both, may be really attributed to the influence of Emma.

The following letter written from Rome, attests the beneficial influence of awakened piety over the heart of the King. He wrote in these terms to some of the great men of his kingdom :—" Be it known to you that I have humbly made a vow to Almighty God, to conduct myself hereafter, as shall become me; to govern my kingdom as a religious and just monarch, and to distribute equal justice among my subjects. I have prepared to correct whatever errors I may have been led into by the impetuosity of youth or want of reflection. I therefore desire and command my counsellors to whom the affairs of the kingdom are entrusted, on no pretence to be guilty in themselves, or suffer others to be guilty of any acts of injustice, either through fear of me, or with a view to favour any person high in power. The laws shall be equally distributed among my nobles and my commoners. Let him beware who either values my friendship or his own welfare."[2]

Canute and Emma are said to have, for several years, regularly attended together the Festival of the Purification. Emma was a great benefactress to the Saxon church, and the extraordinary liberality displayed by Canute towards the Abbeys of Winchester, Ramsey, and Ely, is to be ascribed to the interest Emma exerted in their favour; in especial Ramsey was beloved

[1] Plate 28, Strutt's Saxon Antiquities.

[2] Great and Good Deeds of the Danes.

by the Queen, and received many splendid gifts from Canute on that account. The King and Queen, say the chroniclers, visited Croyland and Ely in person, and piously offered their regal donations. On Croyland, besides other and more valuable presents, the King bestowed "twelve beautiful white bears' skins, for the altars on festival days," and also a "vestment of silk embroidered with eagles of gold." These rich gifts were as rare as costly, for though the skin of the brown bear was then common in England, the white was scarce and uncommon.

Queen Emma's offering to the monks of Ely is worthy of remark, as showing how excellent the art of needlework was in her time, and how she excelled in embroidery, "and with her own hands wrought a beautiful altar-cloth," which she presented to the priests. This costly piece of ornamental industry is thus described:—"it was of a green colour, and beautified with plates of gold, that appeared raised: if viewed lengthways along the altar, it seemed of a blood-red colour, and it was finished at the corners with rich gold ornaments, which reached to the ground."[1] These gold ornaments were of a kind of gold thread and bullion-work termed "orfrays."

Canute liberally endowed St. Swithin's Abbey, Winchester: besides other rich jewels, the King bestowed on it a cross worth as much as the revenue of England amounted to in one year.[2] Roger, of Wendover, relates that "Canute decorated the Old Minster Winchester, with such magnificence that the minds of

[1] Resembling a shot silk (such as is frequently seen in early miniatures); Gale, vol. ii., p. 505.

[2] Howel.

strangers were confounded at the sight of the gold and silver and the splendour of the jewels. This, too, was done at the instigation of Queen Emma, whose profuse liberality consumed whole treasuries on such objects." Upon the destruction of monasteries many of the costly presents of Canute and Emma to the church must have been rifled and cast into the melting-pot, for the mere value of the metals of which they were composed.

A pall is named, as presented by the King and Queen, probably of her work, to Glastonbury "of various colours woven with the figures of peacocks." This was on the occasion of the visit to the tomb of Edmund Ironside, whom Canute was accustomed to style "his brother." A rich cloth, embroidered with "apples of gold and pearls," was given at the same time the charter was granted to the Abbey of St. Edmunsbury, in signing which Emma writes "Ego Alfgifa Regina," and the King names her as "Myne Queen Elfgifa," who, he says, gave the church a revenue of "four thousand Eels, in Lakinghithe."[1]

It was on the occasion of Canute's visit to Ely, accompanied by Queen Emma and the nobles of the court, when they were gliding along the river in their barge, that the King himself composed that little Saxon ballad of which, unfortunately, one single stanza alone has been preserved. As the royal party approached the church the monks were at their devotions, and the

[1] Fisheries were one of the sources of rent noticed in the Domesday Survey, where the produce in kind is mentioned, it seems chiefly to have consisted in eels, herrings, and salmons; sometimes they were paid by stitches or sticks, each stick having twenty-five This was commonly the case in payment from mills.—Sir H. Ellis.

sweetness of their melody was so attractive to the King, that he ordered his rowers to pause near the spot whence the sounds proceeded, and to move gently while he listened to the harmony of the voices which came floating from the summit of the high rock before him. So great was his delight that it broke forth in the following poem.

"Merie sungen the muneches binnen Ely,
Tha Cnut ching reuther by:
Roweth cnites nœr the land,
And here we thes muneches sœng.

"Merry sang the monks in Ely
When King Canute sailed by:
Row, Knights, near the land,
And let us hear the monks' song."

Probably Canute sang these lines to some musical instrument, like the minstrels.[1] It is much to be regretted that the rest is lost. It has been thought that this poem is not so early as the time of Canute, and Lappenburg's learned editor, Dr. Thorpe, considers it no older than the thirteenth century. However this may be, as regards the language of the songs as handed down to us, there is no reason to doubt that the King might actually have composed such a poem, if indeed it did not proceed from the cultivated mind of Queen Emma herself, which is by no means impossible. When the barbarous deeds of the personages of those times are

[1] The ancient musical instruments were the *viele*, the flute, the pipe, the harp, and the *rotæ*. This last, a species of harp, occurs in Chaucer and all our early poets. The *viele* was not the instrument now called by that name, but shaped like a fiddle, and played with a bow. The early music was written with square notes, ranged on four lines; the fifth was not introduced till late in the reign of St. Louis.—M. Le Grand's Notes to Fabliaux.

considered, it is a fact which creates extreme surprise that the ideas expressed in ballads and poems by the minstrels of that very period should be so full of delicacy and refined feeling. In the sagas there is an occasional gentleness and tenderness, where love and beauty are the themes, which contrast singularly with the records of burning, slaying, and outrages of all kinds perpetrated by the heroes. The charms of nature and the beauties of scenery appear to be fully appreciated by the "barbarians," who, if they acted like savages in some respects, seem to have the less excuse, as their songs prove, that though they "pursued the wrong," they knew "the right."

The skill, so insisted on in all accounts of presents made to the church, both in the arts of needlework and in the chasing and carving of metals, cannot be denied them; and that they understood the degrees of perfection to which such arts might attain, is shown by their earliest traditions. For instance, the sacred histories of the Scandinavians relate the marvels wrought by Vaulund the Forger, the Vulcan of the North. The Icelandic Saga thus describes his skill. "Vaulund was so renowned throughout the north that by one consent all the smiths acknowledged him their superior. To denote the excellent property of any forged weapon it was usual to say the artist must have been a Vaulund. A rivalry having ensued between him and King Nigundur's former smith, it was agreed that Vaulund should forge a sword, and his rival a helm, which the latter was to put on, and if it were found proof against the sword, Vaulund's head should be forfeited. Accordingly the King's former smith put on the helm, and sitting on a bench, bid Vaulund, in defiance, use all his strength.

The latter, who stood behind him, then raised his arm, and, at a single stroke clove the armour and armourer down to the girdle, and inquiring what he felt, was answered by the smith that he had an internal sensation, as if from a stream of cold water. 'Shake thyself,' said Vaulund: the smith immediately did so, his body separated, and either half fell on opposite sides of the bench."[1]

Canute and Emma were great encouragers of church building; and to them may be attributed some of the most celebrated in England, as well as several in Normandy, which "time, war, flood, and fire" have spared to the present time, to prove the wondrous powers of architects and carvers in the early ages, never to be even approached in excellence by later and more enlightened artists.

In 1020, the Cathedral of Chartres, still one of the most magnificent in France, which had been destroyed by lightning, was rebuilt by its bishop, Fulbert. The names of Canute and Richard II., Duke of Normandy, are recorded as among those who assisted the work by their contributions. In the same year, the second of his marriage with Emma, Canute built the Monastery at Edmundsbury, "where the body of King Edmond lies, and by the advice of Queen Emma and the bishops and barons, established monks in it under Guy, a man, humble, modest, and pious."[2] The Abbey of St. Bennet's, in the parish of Sudham, county of Norfolk,[3] was another foundation of Canute, between the years 1020 and 1030, as well as a church at Ashdone, in

[1] Notes to Frithiof's Saga, translated by Oscar Baker.
[2] Roger of Wendover. [3] Seven miles from Norwich.

Essex, at the dedication of which all the English and Danish lords assisted.[1]

Emma had only two children by Canute; they were named Hardicanute and Gunilda, the former was surnamed "the Hardy or Robust," from his personal accomplishments;[2] the latter was reckoned one of the loveliest of her sex, and in her father's lifetime was contracted to the Emperor of Germany, whom she afterwards married.

Hardicanute, who by Emma's agreement, prior to her union with Canute, was destined to inherit the crown of England, was quite a child when the ceremony of translating the body of Bishop St. Elphege took place, of which the Saxon Chronicle gives the following account:—

"This year, 1023, King Canute within London, in St. Paul's minster, gave full leave to Archbishop Ethelnoth and Bishop Brithwine, and to all the servants of God who were with them, that they might take up from the tomb the Archbishop St. Elphege; and they then did so, on the sixth before the ides of June. And the illustrious King, and the archbishop and suffragan bishops, and earls, and very many clergy, and also laity, carried in a ship, his holy body over the Thames to Southwark, and there delivered the holy martyr to the archbishop and his companions; and they then with a worshipful hand and sprightly joy, bore him to Rochester. Then, on the third day, came Emma the lady, with her royal child Hardicanute; and then they all, with much state and bliss, and songs of praise, bore the holy archbishop into Canterbury; and then worshipfully brought him into Christ's Church, on

[1] Holinshed. [2] Hume.

the third before the ides of June. Again, after that, on the eight day, the seventeenth before the kalends of July, Archbishop Ethelnoth, and Bishop Elfsy, and Bishop Brithwine, and all those who were with them, deposited St. Elphege's holy body on the north side of Christ's altar, to the glory of God, and the honour of the holy archbishop, and to the eternal health of all who there daily seek his holy body with a devout heart and with all humility. God Almighty have mercy upon all Christian men, through St. Elphege's holy merits."[1]

Canute resided chiefly in England, yet he occasionally visited Denmark, attended by an English fleet. The year after his marriage with Queen Emma he went there, and in all probability was accompanied by his royal consort, A.D. 1019.[2]

It appears that Earl Ulf Sprakalegsson had been left protector of Denmark by Canute when he went to England, his son "Hardicanute" being in his hands. The summer after this arrangement had been made by the English King, the Earl gave it out that King Canute had at parting made known to him his will and desire, that the Danes should take his son Hardicanute as King over the Danish dominions. He said Canute had done this on it being represented to him that the nation suffered many disadvantages from the absence of its King. "Hitherto," said Earl Ulf, "we have been so fortunate as to live without disturbance, but now we hear that the King of Norway is going to attack us, to which is added the fear of the people, that the Swedish King will join him, and now King Canute is in England." The Earl then produced King Canute's letter and seal confirming all that he asserted. Many

[1] Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. [2] Lingard.

other chiefs supported this business, and in consequence of all these persuasions the people resolved to take Hardicanute as King, which was done as the same thing.[1] This circumstance passed over in our English histories, throws light on the proceedings of Queen Emma: the Danish historian proceeds to say, "that Queen Emma had been principal promoter of this determination for she had got the letter to be written and provided with the seal, having cunningly got hold of the King's signet; but from him it was all concealed."

By this account it would seem, that Emma was intriguing to advance her son before his father's death, and had not shrunk from forgery to accomplish her end. The story, whether true or false, is thus continued:—

"When Hardicanute and Earl Ulf heard for certain that King Olaf was come from Norway with a large army, they went to Jutland, where the greatest strength of the Danish Kingdom lies, sent out message-tokens, and summoned to them a great force: but when they heard that the Swedish King was also come with his army, they thought they would not have strength enough to give battle to both, and therefore kept their army together in Jutland, and resolved to defend that country against the Kings. The whole of their ships they assembled together at Lynnfiord, and waited there for King Canute."[2]

The Dano-English King, in the meantime, had sailed with a vast force from England, and arrived in safety at Denmark, where he went to Lynnfiord, and there he

[1] Snorro's Kings of Norway. [2] Snorro.

found gathered besides, a large army of the men of the country.

When the Danes "heard that King Canute had come from the west to Lynnfiord, they sent men to him, and to Queen Emma, and begged her to find out if the King were angry or not, and to let them know. Your son Hardicanute will pay the full mulct the King may demand, if he has done anything which is thought to be against the King." He replies, "that Hardicanute has not done this of his own judgment, and, therefore," says he, "it has turned out as might be expected, that when he, a child, and without understanding, wanted to be called King, the country, when any evil came and an enemy appeared, must be conquered by foreign princes, if our might had not come to his aid. If he will have any reconciliation with me, let him come to me and lay down the mock title of King he has given himself."

The Queen sent these very words to Hardicanute, and at the same time she begged him not to decline coming, for as she truly observed, he had no force to stand against his father. When this message came to Hardicanute, he asked the advice of the Earl and other chief people who were with him; but it was soon found, that when the people heard King *Canute the Old* was arrived, they all streamed to him, and seemed to have no confidence but in him alone. Then Earl Ulf and his fellows saw that they had but two roads to take, either to go to the King and leave all to his mercy, or to fly the country. All pressed Hardicanute to go to his father, which advice he followed. When they met he fell at his father's feet, and laid his seal which accompanied the kingly title on his knee. King Canute took Hardicanute by the hand and placed him

in as high a seat as he used to sit in before. Earl Ulf[1] sent his son Swend, who was a sister's son of King Canute, and the same age as Hardicanute, to the King. He prayed for grace and reconciliation for the Earl his father, and offered himself as hostage for the Earl. King Canute ordered him to tell the Earl to assemble his men and ships and come to him, and then they would talk of reconciliation. The Earl did so."[2]

Canute's happiness was not unfrequently clouded. Besides the annoyance caused him by the rebellion in the name of Hardicanute, directed by Earl Ulf, he was obliged to make war on his wife's brother, Duke Richard, in consequence of his having repudiated Estritha his duchess, on a very trifling pretence.[3] To

[1] Wolf or Ulf was brother-in-law to Canute, and Earl Godwin was married to Gyda, sister of Ulf. He was afterwards assassinated by Canute's orders, after the battle of Helge, 1025-7.

[2] Snorro's Kings of Norway.

[3] Duke Richard, the second, or, as Holinshed calls him, third of that name, brother of Queen Emma, married first Judith, sister of the Earl of Bretagne, by whom he had three sons, Richard, Robert, and William, and three daughters, of whom one died young; Alix, another, married Reignold, Earl of Burgoyne; a third, *Eleanor, to be Earl of Flanders.* After a ten years' union Judith died, and Duke Richard married Estrida, sister of Canute. He purchased a divorce from her, and then married a lady called Pavia, by whom he had two sons, William, Earl of Arques, and Mauger, Archbishop of Rouen. Duke Richard died in 1022, fifteen years before Canute, and was succeeded by Richard III, who reigned only one year, and then Robert became Duke A.D. 1023. After a vigorous reign of seven years, Robert departed on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, leaving the dukedom to his son William, afterwards the Conqueror, then seven years of age (A.D. 1030). Richard having been so long dead, the expedition made in 1035 must have been grounded on some other cause. Edward and Alfred were at the Norman court, and Robert before his departure had, by an embassy, requested Canute to give his cousins a share of England; but that being refused, Richard had pre-

avenge the affront, Canute sailed at the head of a large fleet to Normandy, and landed at Rouen; but scarcely had he arrived, when he learnt the sad tidings of the death of his favourite son Sweyn,[1] governor of Norway. Some accounts relate that Canute was so deeply affected by this event, that it brought on an ague of which he died at Rouen.[2]

The Saxon Chronicle differs in the statement of Canute's death, and declares that event to have taken place at Shaftesbury, in England, on the second day before the Ides of November, 1035, and that he was interred at Winchester, the epitaph on his tomb being—

"HERE LIES CANUTE, CELEBRATED FOR HIS PIETY."

He was only forty years of age at the time of his death, and he had been eighteen years united to Queen Emma.

At the time of Canute's death, not one of the Queen's sons was in England; Hardicanute, on whom, by virtue of her marriage contract and his father's dying wishes, the crown should have devolved, was in Denmark, where he had been crowned the preceding year, and made no haste to assert his claims in England. Harold Harefoot, the only surviving son of Canute's first marriage,[3]

pared a fleet, intending to assert their claims by force of arms. That was, however, prevented by the ships being destroyed in a storm. Afterwards Canute promised Wessex to the sons of Emma; but the pilgrimage of Robert, and his own subsequent death, put off the execution of this promise, had it ever been intended to perform it.—Rapin and Holinshed, Roger of Wendover.

[1] Rapin says that Sweyn, brother of Harefoot, survived Hardicanute.

[2] Saxo-Grammaticus, Grafton, and Polydore.

[3] Harold is said to have been surnamed "Harefoot," from having

knowing how superior England was to the crown of Denmark, allotted to him by his father's will, hurried over to endeavour to secure it for himself. The Queen also, if she had not, as some say, returned with Canute prior to that monarch's death into England, lost no time in doing so; but before anything could be done in the behalf either of herself or her son, Harold had contrived to secure the kingdom for himself. The reason of this was that the cities north of the Thames durst not oppose the Danes, who ruled over them, and were forced to acknowledge him; but Wessex declared boldly for Hardicanute. This part of England was very populous, being a place of refuge for all those whom the Danish cruelty and oppression expelled from the more northern districts; it was chiefly inhabited by Saxons, who maintained their freedom, and were attached to the persons of their royal family.[1] Emma herself was a great favourite with the West Saxons, who determined to uphold the rights of her children.

Winchester was the capital of Wessex, and royal residence, and thither Emma repaired; the palace contained not only her own private property, but the royal treasures which Canute had entrusted to her keeping for his son Hardicanute.[2] But a powerful combination was speedily formed against the widowed Queen, who,

one foot covered with hair. Hume says, "from his agility in running and walking;" he was fond of hunting, and being averse to riding on horseback, pursued the amusement on foot.*

"Harold would choose the time of prayer, when the people were going to church, to go out with his dogs.—Thierry.

[1] Rapin. [2] Simeon of Durham; Brompton.

* Lingard.

at this moment, though the mother of three sons and of two daughters, seems to have been left to support her sorrow alone. While Emma fixed herself at Winchester, a witenagemote was hastily assembled at Oxford,[1] which was to bring much more grief to her than she had yet experienced. Leofric, Consul of Chester; Godwin, Earl of Kent; and others were present,[2] the object being to discuss the claims of the rival princes, Harold and Hardicanute. The nobles of Wessex supported Hardicanute, in spite of his absence,[3] and were seconded by Earl Godwin, who objected to Harold on account of the rumoured illegitimacy of his birth; but this appears to have been considered no objection in the eyes of his own countrymen, the Danes. Leofric, "the trusty friend of Canute," overruled his remonstrance, and the Londoners and other lords north of the Thames, favouring Harold's claim, appointed him ruler of the kingdom, "not only for himself, but for Hardicanute who was then in Denmark."[4] The treachery of Godwin mainly brought about this conclusion, he having on Harold's arrival secretly placed in his hands the will of the late King, which had been entrusted to his care, and covenanted to establish him on the throne, provided only that he would espouse his daughter Editha. This understanding not being generally known, Godwin, in the council, craftily

[1] Oxford was often the seat of the English court; and Canute had held one great council there. The same city witnessed the murder of Sigeferth, husband of Algitha, who became the Queen of Edmund Ironside; on the present occasion, the accession of Harold was settled there, and it was not only the spot on which that King was crowned, but the one in which he ended his short career.

[2] Grafton, Saxon Chronicle.

[3] Caradoc of Llancarvan.

[4] Ranulf Higden; Saxon Chronicle; Grafton.

appeared to support the cause of Hardicanute. Ambition was the ruling feature of Godwin's character, and while thus through his connivance the council was called, which gave a crown to the future husband of his daughter, it was arranged by the same meeting that Emma and Godwin should jointly rule over the dependant territory of Wessex, until the arrival of Hardicanute;[1] the Queen was to maintain her royal state in Winchester, having with her "the household of the King her son," and Godwin was to be general of her forces. The royal treasures and furniture at Winchester were to belong to Emma and her son;[2] but scarcely had Harold been crowned at Oxford, an office performed with his own hands,[3] than he hastened in person to Winchester, whither indeed his emissaries had already preceded him, and seized on all the most precious articles at the royal palace, even "before Emma could take possession of them." In spite, however, of this violent treatment, Emma remained at Winchester "as long as she was able to do so." Finding that Godwin engrossed all the power in Wessex in his own hands, and that her children were effectually shut out from the government, the Queen affected indifference from motives of policy, and devoted her whole time to the occupation of visiting the churches, as though her thoughts had been entirely bestowed on a future state and the salvation of her soul. In this, much also of sincerity was combined; for Emma was naturally pious,

[1] Lingard; Gaillard; Rapin. [2] Milner.

[3] Egelnoth, who had been seventeen years Archbishop, refused to crown Harold, saying that Canute had enjoined him to set the crown upon none but the issue of Emma. Then laying the crown on the altar, he denounced an imprecation against any bishop that should venture to perform the ceremony.

and deeply mourned the loss of a beloved and affectionate husband.

The affection of Emma for the sons of Ethelred did not appear as great as that she felt for the heir of Canute. Hardicanute came not, however, to her wishes, to assert his rights and reinstate her in her royal authority. Conceiving that the King and Godwin, deceived by her affected neutrality, had no fear of her interposing in affairs of state, Emma at length determined to recall her two sons by Ethelred to England, expressing the natural desire of a mother to behold the Princes who had been some time separated from her; but, in reality, her aim in sending for them was to awaken the love and affection of the Saxons for the race of their ancient kings, should Hardicanute fail to arrive; and Godwin's penetration having discovered this, he artfully applauded her scheme, and even aided her in the execution of it, but only with the view of delivering the Princes to Harold. The King informed, through Godwin, of Emma's wish, consented that her sons should be sent for. Edward, indeed, had early in Harold's reign come over with a considerable fleet, but not finding any countenance from his mother, who desired Hardicanute to succeed to the throne, and was, therefore, averse to his claim at that time, and probably unable to assist him without danger to both, had contented himself with burning a few villages, and then went back to Normandy.

Harold, aware that the Queen naturally aimed at placing her sons on the throne, had striven by many devices to get them into his power, and on Emma's determination to invite them to England, wrote them the following letter in their mother's name:—

"Emma, in name only Queen, to her sons Alfred

and Edward, imparts motherly salutation. While we severally bewail the death of our lord the King, most dear sons, and while daily ye are deprived more and more of the kingdom your inheritance, I admire what counsel ye take, knowing that your intermitted delay is a daily strengthening to the reign of your usurper, who incessantly goes about from town to city, gaining the chief nobles to his party either by gifts, prayers, or threats. But they had much rather one of you should reign over them, than be held under the power of him who now overrules them. I entreat, therefore, that one of you come to me speedily and privately, to receive from me wholesome counsel, and to know how the business which I intend shall be accomplished. By this messenger present, send back what you determine. Farewell, as dear both as mine own heart."[1]

This letter, which, by what followed, might as well have been written by their mother, as it was what she wished, was delivered into the hands of the princes, together with presents really sent to them from Emma, and, as such, both were received with joy, and a glad message returned, appointing a time and place for the desired meeting.[2] That Godwin himself was the bearer of these tidings to Emma is not impossible, as some say he was employed as ambassador.[3] Fifty vessels of chosen men of Normandy and Flanders had accompanied the Saxon princes, one or both, who landed at Sandwich, and from thence proceeded to Canterbury. According to some authorities Emma, mistrusting Godwin, from some intelligence received by her sons on their arrival, permitted one only at a time to visit him, re-

[1] Encomium Emmæ. [2] Milton, Roger of Wendover.
[3] Milner, Grafton, Scott.

taining the other with herself. Alfred, whether after having seen the Queen or not is uncertain, was about to pay a visit to Harold, when he was arrested by Earl Godwin. The Saxon Chronicle says, Godwin prevented Alfred going to his mother, "knowing it would be displeasing to King Harold." As Guildford was on the road to Winchester, it may be that Alfred had not yet seen Emma, and that he had but rested in his way to the court of Wessex, to partake of the sumptuous entertainment provided by the Earl. On this occasion it is said by some, that, in a private intercourse, Godwin offered the Prince the throne, with the hand of his daughter, which he refused.[1] The alternative was immediately had recourse to by the irritable noble, and the fate of Alfred was from that moment sealed. Guildford, the scene of the carousal of the Saxon and Norman lords on that eventful night, was a town belonging to Godwin. Alfred was under his protection, and he betrayed his trust. According to custom, the guests of the Earl drank deep, and, as the hour advanced, became overpowered with sleep. Then the work of death began, which the cowardly Harold had planned, and Godwin connived at as an ally. The attendants of Alfred were disarmed, and put to the sword; every tenth man only being spared. As for "the ill-fated Prince, who was every way worthy to be a king,"[2] the child of exile and misfortune, he found himself hurried away, first to the presence of Harold, in London, and afterwards to the Isle of Ely. The noble to whom the royal youth was consigned, aggravated his situation by every insult which could be offered. A sorry horse was provided, he was stripped of his royal attire, and his

[1] Gaillard, Grafton, Milner. [2] Roger of Wendover.

feet tied beneath the saddle, exposed to the mockery and derision of every ordinary beholder in the towns and villages through which he had to pass. Thus pitiable was the fate of the son of Emma, herself the Queen and at the very moment ruling over some not inconsiderable portion of the land. A court was convened of persons suited to their office, at Ely, by whom Alfred was sentenced to lose his eyes; and the unfortunate youth, on whom this cruel decree was executed by force alone, expired after a few days of lingering torment, either from his suffering, or the hand of a secret assassin.[1]

Harold and Godwin stand charged to this day, in the face of posterity, with this inhuman murder.[2] Though the monk of St. Omer, who might be supposed well acquainted with the facts, represents the Earl as ignorant of Alfred's danger;[3] nevertheless, so convinced were his contemporaries in general of his guilt, that he was twice arraigned for the murder: four years after, in Hardicanute's reign, by the Archbishop of York, and after that by Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, when Edward the Confessor was on the throne. On both those occasions he was acquitted; but Edward himself never really believed him innocent, though Godwin died in the verymoment of defending himself from the renewed charge. There is too much reason to think self-interest blinded both Godwin and Harold to the enormity of the crime: one common in those times, where might was for ever struggling with right. The Queen herself has been charged with consenting and aiding in the crime, by sending the letter, which brought her sons to England; but this, of course, was the intention of the

[1] Lingard. [2] Turner. [3] Lingard.

senders; and, that she was perfectly innocent is plain by the consternation she exhibited when the fatal tidings reached her, and her adopting the instant precaution of sending her remaining son, Edward, who is thought to have been with her at the time, to her Norman relatives; a step attended with no trifling difficulty, and which gave great mortification to the King and Earl by disappointing them of one of their intended victims. It was, perhaps, this act which brought fresh wrath from Godwin on Emma; for the Earl next accused her of treason, and Harold had formerly not only despoiled her of all the royal treasures,[1] but now seized on her private goods and treasures, left for her own use by Canute, and banished her from the kingdom.

Emma's friends, indeed, desired that she should quit England at this juncture, but where should she seek an asylum? It might have been expected that she would have taken shelter among her own relatives in Normandy, whither she had sent her son, Prince Edward;[2] but Duke William, being very young, was, while a minor, under the government of others,[3] and the Queen feared to awaken Harold's jealousy of her Norman connections. Emma preferred the asylum offered her by her cousin Baldwin, Earl of Flanders, who, finding the invitation he had sent to her was accepted, received her with all the respect due to misfortune, and treated her with the greatest courtesy and kindness.[4] He not only gave her the Castle of Bruges for her residence, but assigned her a handsome pro-

[1] Encomium Emmæ, Caradoc. [2] Harding. [3] Ibid.

[4] A.D. 1037. The Saxon Chronicle says, "This year was Harold chosen King of all, and Hardicanute forsaken, because he staid too

vision for her support during her abode in Flanders. There the Queen remained for three years, attended by the few faithful adherents who had accompanied her in her exile. Emma informed the good Earl how hardly she had been treated by Harold, and how Alfred, her son, had been put to death, and Edward forced to fly from the kingdom.

> "Wherefore therle to Kyng Hardknowt then wrote
> All hir compleynt, and of his succour prayed
> And he should help with all his might, God wote,
> It were amended of that she was affrayed.
> He came anone in warre full well arrayed
> Into Flaundres, his mother for to please,
> Hir for to socour and sette hir hert in ease."[1]

A.D. 1039. After repeated messages from the Earl and Emma, and the lapse of two years from his father's death, Hardicanute, who was more "the Unready" than the sons of Ethelred, sailed for Flanders, and spent a year there with his mother, consulting as to their future plans.[2] Under the cover of this visit, the Danish King had assembled a fleet of sixty sail, and he was actually on the point of making a descent upon England, when the news of Harold Harefoot's death was forwarded to him,[3] on which he sailed for London,

long in Denmark; and then they drove out his mother Elfgiva, the Queen, *without any kind of mercy, against the stormy winter;* and she came then to Bruges beyond sea; and Baldwin, the Earl there, well received her, and there kept her the while she had need." The Earl of Flanders was married to a princess of the ducal family of Normandy;* but one of his daughters was wife of Tosti, son of Godwin, Emma's enemy, which makes his conduct only appear the more generous on this occasion towards Emma.

[1] Saxon Chron. [2] Lingard. [3] Hume, Roger of Wendover, &c.

* Eleanor, Emma's niece: see p. 304 (note).

and was received with much triumph; his claim being at once acknowledged by the whole nation, 1040. He was shortly after crowned at London, by Egelnoth, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had so resolutely refused to crown another than Canute's son. The favour which Hardicanute received is attributed to the regard entertained by the people, especially those of Wessex, for his mother, Queen Emma.

Emma, to her great joy, recalled by her son, after a three years' exile, returned to England. Hardicanute received her with much honour, and placed the administration of the affairs of government in her hands and those of Godwin,—a singular coincidence by which the second time, Emma found herself on close terms of alliance with her old enemy. Godwin had been one of the first to do homage to Hardicanute, but the King, doubtless, feared his professions of regard even more than the open enmity he had before experienced. Having first sent for his half-brother, Edward, from Normandy, the Prince, under sanction of Hardicanute, raised against the Earl a charge of having murdered Prince Alfred, and loudly demanded justice. Living, Bishop of Worcester, was likewise accused of participation in the crime. Elfric, Archbishop of York, was the person who was employed with Godwin, by the King, to disinter Harold Harefoot's body, for the gratification of his revenge for the murder. In this painful task the Earl and prelate disagreed, and Elfric accused Godwin. Godwin denied the charge against him, making out, on oath, that the part he had in the putting out the eyes of Alfred, he was constrained to by order of Harold. He, in fact, legally acquitted himself "by his own oath, and

the oaths of a jury of his peers, the principal noblemen of England." Whether innocent or not he was restored to favour, and shared with Emma in the administration of the kingdom. In all likelihood Hardicanute but carried out the wishes of his mother in this endeavour to bring Godwin to justice; if this was the case, and that a churchman was his accuser seems to render it likely, it may account for the vindictive feelings Godwin afterwards exhibited against Emma, upon the accession of Edward to the throne.[1]

The policy of Godwin had led him, in the hope of inducing the King to forgiveness, to offer him a very sumptuous present. His peace-offering, which was accepted, was a galley, finely rigged and manned. As for Living, he was deprived of his bishopric, which was given to his accuser, Elfric, but purchased his pardon by a round sum of money, when he was reinstated.

Godwin's ship had a stern of gold, and eighty soldiers uniformly and richly suited: on their heads they all wore gilt burgonets, and on their bodies a triple gilt habergeon: swords with gilt hilts girded to their waists; a battle-axe, according to the Danish fashion, on their left shoulder; a target with gilt bosses borne in their left hand, a dart in the right hand, and their arms bound about with two bracelets of gold. The gift of Godwin is quite in accord with the manners of the day, and seems an adroit imitation of the celebrated ship of the Viking Frithiof, the swift-sailing Ellida, thus beautifully described in the Saga of Bishop Tegner:[2]

[1] Lingard.

[2] Translated by Oscar Baker.

"The bark Ellida next was Frithiof's own
Viking, 'tis said, from war returning home,
Sail'd by the strand, and on a wreck he spied
A man, who seemed to revel with the tide,
Of noble stature, and of face serene,
Joyful and glad, though changeful was his mien:
Like the sea basking in the solar sheen:
A cloak of blue and belt of gold he wore,
Bedecked with corals from a distant shore.
White, as the foam on billows, was his beard,
And, as the ocean, green his hair appeared.
Then, thither Viking steered his floating shell,
And saved the Being from the billows' swell.

. . . . . .

But he, while smiling, to his saviour said:
'My bark is staunch, the breezes will not fail;
This very night a hundred miles I sail.
Long shall thy kindness in my mem'ry dwell,
And soon some gift my gratitude shall tell.

. . . . . .

Yes, when to-morrow thou shalt wander o'er
Thy lands, some gift shall wait thee on the shore.'
Next day, when Viking wandered by the sea,
Lo! as an eagle rushes at its prey,
A stately Dragon swept into the bay.
The rudder moved, untouched by human hand,
And none, save spirits, steered that bark to land.
But mid the reefs and shoals it held its way,
And scatheless flew amidst the driving spray.

. . . . . .

The gift was kingly; for each oaken beam
Was grown together without joint or seam.
High in the stem the Dragon's head arose,
His gilded jaws a fiery gape disclose;
His breast was speckled o'er with blue and gold,
Whilst, in the stern, his tail in many a fold,
Bright as a mail of silver, upward flew,
Shining resplendent towards the heavens of blue:
When his jet pinions, edged with brilliant red,
High in the air, to catch the breeze were spread;

His speed outstripped the headlong raving wind,
And left the eagle in his flight behind.
When that brave bark was filled with steel-clad men,
It seemed a fortress floating on the main."

That Queen Emma was particularly attached to the city of Winchester,[1] is evident from her returning to dwell there after the death of Harold; even during her temporary absence also, she had continued to bestow her royal presents on the Cathedral.[2] The Queen's name is joined to that of her son Hardicanute, in his charters to her favourite monasteries,[3] and however authors may differ in their accounts of the character of that King himself, they unite in praising the kindness which he showed to his mother Queen Emma; in this he was at least much superior to his brother, the sainted and vaunted Edward.[4]

In another point, the character of Hardicanute also deserves admiration, that of fraternal affection. Edward, the son of Ethelred, was invited to his court, A.D. 1041, and not only came there without fear, but remained an honoured guest during this king's short reign.[5] Hardicanute also carried out the plan of his father, as regarded Gunilda, daughter of Emma, whom Canute contracted to the Emperor Henry. This lovely young Princess is designated as the King of England's "fairest sister," to distinguish her from her half-sister Goda, daughter of Ethelred, and sister of Prince Edward,

[1] Milner's History of Winchester. [2] Howel.

[3] Roger of Wendover, Marianus, Higden.

[4] Personally, Hardicanute was mild, and of a generous nature. His table was spread at four different hours in the day for his guests. Perhaps to the conviviality of living acquired among the Danes, may be attributed his feeble health and constant attacks of illness.

[5] Roger of Wendover, Marianus, Higden.

who had been united first to Walter, Earl of Mantes, and afterwards to Eustace, Earl of Boulogne, of whom we shall have to speak hereafter. Gunilda was bestowed with much solemnity and magnificence on the Emperor. After some time, the young Empress was accused of infidelity to her husband, but was cleared by a judicial combat: a dwarf in her service named Mimicon, who had attended her from England, fought with the champion appointed by her accusers, who was named Rodingar, a man of gigantic frame: the dwarf obtaining the victory, the fair fame of his mistress was considered established. Gunilda, though vindicated by this happy event, could never be persuaded to live again with her husband. Forsaking the world, she assumed the holy veil of a nun, in which she ended her days,[1] five years only after the death of her father, King Canute. The Chronicle exclaims that she died "as the noble morning star sinks at early dawn."[2]

Hardicanute's death was very sudden in 1042, in the midst of the festivities of a wedding dinner, the nuptials celebrated being those of a noble Dane called Tovi and Gyda, the daughter of Osgod Clapa. Some say the King was poisoned; but it is more generally thought his death was the result of intemperance, for "he died as he stood at his drink." The scene of this event was the royal palace or mansion of the Saxon Kings, which formerly stood in that part of the parish of Lambeth,[3] now known by the name of Kennington, and which constituted part of the dower or estate of the Princess Goda, daughter of Ethelred and Emma.

The death of Hardicanute was a great blow to Emma:

[1] Ranulf, Higden. [2] Norman Traditions, Malmesbury.
[3] MS. History of Lambeth Palace.

and the Saxon Chronicle states that his mother, who tenderly loved him, "for his soul gave to the New Minster the head of St. Valentine the Martyr." The English hailed the event as a signal of deliverance from the Danish yoke, and the festival called "Hog's Tide," or "Hock Wednesday," was for centuries after kept by them in commemoration of the circumstance.

At the time of Hardicanute's death, Prince Edward was in Normandy. The Queen, Godwin, and Living, Bishop of Worcester, in the emergency, united their interest in his favour, and on this occasion were upheld by Leofric, the powerful Earl of Chester:[1] by their combined exertions, Edward was recalled to assume the sovereignty, the English being persuaded easily to take this step, having never forgotten the fact that they had formerly sworn allegiance to him "while yet in his mother's womb."[2] Accordingly, Edward, after having given pledges that he would bring but few Normans with him,[3] came over to England, and ascended the throne, being consecrated on Easter Day, 1043, at Winchester, Queen Emma assisting at the ceremony.

Edward was thus restored to his rights, after having been excluded from them during a long succession of disappointments; for, twenty-five-years before, Emma had, by her marriage contract with Canute, excluded the children of Ethelred, and since then Edward had dwelt at the court of his maternal relatives, a dependant and an exile.[4] The Queen had on many occasions shown

[1] Higden. [2] Brit. Sancta. [3] Higden.

[4] Edward testified much gratitude, on coming to the throne, to the Normans, who had befriended his adverse fortunes. He owed nothing, as he thought, to Godwin, his mother, or the Saxons; but surrounded his person with Norman favourites, while Emma still preserved a Saxon court at Winchester. Edward plainly showed his dislike to

that her conduct towards him was guided by convenience rather than affection; but Edward, esteemed one of the most holy among those whose names have been recorded in the saintly calendar, was certainly not gifted with the Christian virtue of forgiveness of injuries, at least, as regarded his mother. Of his feelings towards Ethelred we know nothing, and, certainly, Edmund "Ironside," as an elder brother, had set a dangerous example; yet Edward the Confessor was still less filial in his behaviour towards his mother, Queen Emma. It was plain he could not forgive the past, and that although Emma, Godwin, and Living had united to place him on the throne when no other heir remained who had the power to dispute his claim, he remembered that in an earlier period when they might have upheld his right, it had been overlooked and permitted to sink into oblivion. He had no regard for any of them: from his mother he had been almost always separated,

the Anglo-Saxon manners, and patronised foreign tastes. The Saxon nobles perceiving this, gave up their own fashions and imitated those of the French, together with their character and mode of writing, "speaking French in their halls, as though it were a more gentle tongue." The Normans, under Ethelred, Canute, and Edward, were in such favour, and enjoyed so much power at court, that their clerks, or clergy, obtained the best benefices in the land. Robert, "a jolly, ambitious priest," first got to be Bishop of London, and, at a later period, Archbishop of Canterbury, leaving for his successor, in that of London, a countryman named William. Ulfo, another Norman, was preferred to Lincoln, and others to different places, as the King, the benefactor of the church, pleased. These Norman clerks, on being promoted, mocked, abused, and despised the English; and the Saxon nobles were still more irritated to find them increasing so fast in royal favour, as to be called to the secret council of the King. The advancement of Robert, in particular, elated the French and irritated the Saxon nobles.—Ingulphus, Gale, Holinshed.

but to his murdered brother Alfred he was deeply attached, and, as he conceived both Emma and Godwin to have been implicated in his cruel death, an impression remained on his mind, never to be effaced.[1] It was not, however, at first that Edward testified the feelings which he harboured in his breast against his only remaining parent; for we find Emma's great spirit and enterprise had so far got the better of the King's naturally weak and indolent character, that she engrossed a large share of the administration. This awakened the jealousy of Godwin, her old enemy, though present ally, who was too ambitious to permit himself to be superseded. The Earl had stipulated as one of the conditions for Edward's being placed on the throne that he should espouse his daughter Editha, which he hoped would be a new source of influence. Edward, on many pretences, delayed the performance of this engagement; and it is not impossible the Earl suspected Emma of intriguing against him in this matter, more especially as he knew the aversion Edward himself secretly entertained to a union with the daughter of one whom he suspected of his brother's murder.[2] Godwin determined to remove any such obstacle to his own ambition, and

[1] Biog. Brit., Higden.

[2] Whether Emma interfered in the matter of Edward's marriage is doubtful, for it took place in 1044, and in the year after that, the Queen-mother was present at the council when the first charter was granted for the monastery of St. Peter's, Westminster, 1045. Godwin and his sons, after the marriage of Editha, continued to contest for power with the Normans "in the very palace of which his daughter and their sister was lady and mistress;" and the insults they offered, "in turning their exotic modes into derision," and blaming the King for his weakness in placing his confidence in them, were remembered and resented afterwards, when the favourable opportunity presented itself.

hoping to ruin Emma in the King's favour, accused her of several crimes. In this he was seconded by a person scarcely less powerful, or ambitious, than himself, Robert, Bishop of London,[1] the King's spiritual adviser, a prelate of Norman birth, and formerly monk of Jumièges, but whose fortunes had been advanced with those of his royal master. This priest, who warmly seconded Godwin in his charges against Emma, made the following accusations jointly with the Earl:—

First, that the Queen had consented to the death of her son Alfred: secondly, that she endeavoured to prevent Edward's succession to the crown: thirdly, that she kept up an impure intercourse with Alwyn, Bishop of Winchester,[2] her relative, who had been her protector on her leaving Normandy, at the period of her union with Ethelred, having at that time been retained in the royal household, and created Earl of Southampton. On more than one occasion he had aided Ethelred against the Danes, and even opposed Canute, the future sovereign. On the peace being made between Edmund Ironside and Canute, Alwyn ceased to oppose the Danes, and following his inclination for a life of retirement and devotion, assumed the monastic cowl of St. Benedict, in the monastery of St. Swithin, Winchester. In honour of his rank Bishop Ethelwold himself invested him with his holy garb, and soon after, Alwyn was appointed to the monastic office of sacristan. From the time of Emma's second marriage he became the firm friend of Canute, a friendship reciprocated by the monarch. As a monk, Alwyn could not receive presents for his own personal use; therefore, the only means of offering a compliment to him was, by a donation to the

[1] Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. [2] Polydore Vergil, &c.

church of which he had the care. Many marks of favour were shown to Alwyn by Canute and Emma, who bestowed those rich gifts already described on Winchester Cathedral. In the nineteenth year of Alwyn's profession, A.D. 1032, the see of Winchester becoming vacant, he was promoted to it by Canute, at the Queen's especial request, which fact marks the unity of sentiment existing between the royal pair: this was retained by Alwyn through the reigns of Harold, Hardicanute, and Edward the Confessor.[1] It was the frequent visits of Emma to Alwyn which afforded one pretext of accusation against her. Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, is said to have hated, with no common hatred, the Bishop of Winchester, and united with Godwin in machinations against him and the Queen. Edward, unfortunately, was but too easily imposed upon, and too many unfavourable circumstances had already transpired to warp his mind against his mother. Instigated by these bad advisers, Edward called a council at Gloucester. After this he proceeded to Winchester, accompanied by Godwin, Leofric and Siward, three nobles, who are said to have possessed so much individual power, that the King's safety consisted principally in their disunion, for, if united, they might easily have dethroned him. On arriving at the royal city where Emma dwelt, they seized her treasures, and swept away the cattle and corn from the lands which she possessed as her dower, "a sort of military execution," as the historian calls it;[2] while the unhappy Queen herself was committed to prison. The King's visit was so unexpected, and this treatment so unlooked for, that Emma was unable to secure the smallest part of her most private property;

[1] Milner's History of Winchester. [2] Lingard.

so that all her jewels, gold, silver, and other valuables were taken with the rest.[1] There was an order given that she should be supplied with every necessary, yet only a mean pension was left for her subsistence, and not the least respect shown towards her. It is said that in this season she was reduced to the greatest necessity and exposed even to the risk of dying of famine.[2] After this the Queen was obliged to retire to the neighbouring Abbey of Wherwell, until the crimes alleged against her were properly investigated. Edward's own charge against Emma was that "she had accumulated money by every method, regardless of the poor, to whom she would give nothing; therefore it was taken away, that it might aid the poor and replenish the King's exchequer." Malmesbury adds to this that Edward took his mother's estates from her "because she had for a long time mocked at the needy state of her son: nor did she ever assist him: transferring her hatred from the father to the child; for she loved Canute, both living and dead, *better than her first husband.*" Here was an allusion to the differences which had, at one time, existed between Emma and Ethelred, and it is easy to perceive with what jealous feelings Canute's children had been ever regarded by their disinherited elder brother.[3]

That Edward considered one of the three charges,

[1] Roger of Wendover. [2] Bethune.

[3] The reason why King Edward and the English so little respected "this great lady, whose many years had made her an actor of divers fortunes, was her never having affected King Ethelred nor the children she had by him, and for her marriage with Canute, the great enemy and subduer of the kingdom, whom she ever much more loved living, and commended dead."—Daniel's Coll. of the History of England, London, 1626.

made by her enemies, which respected himself, to be correct, is obvious[1] by his own conduct, and the excuses alleged for it: severe as it was n the case of a son to a parent, the sanction of his council made it appear not to be without cause. Accordingly, Emma was kept in close confinement in the Abbey of Wherwell, though some say both the Queen and Alwyn were placed in ward in Winchester. The Bishop was committed to the examination and correction of the clergy. Emma is said to have sorrowed more for the defamation of Alwyn, than her own state of degradation.

Soon after Emma's disgrace, "Stigand was deposed from his Bishopric, and all that he possessed was seized into the King's hands, *because he was nearest to his Mother's counsel, and she went just as he advised her, as people thought.*"[2] Stigand was a Prelate noted for covetousness; he had been Canute's Chaplain, and, as such was patronized and regarded with esteem by Emma, who seems to have delighted to reverence those whom Canute had loved. It was the Normans who prevented Edward's coffers from overflowing, and they not only detested Canute and all he had favoured, but disliked his widow for her half-Danish descent, and were glad of Godwin's accusation against Emma respecting

[1] "Edward himself, in two of his charters, attributes the death of his brother to Harold, and (which is more singular) to Hardicanute. Now, Hardicanute was in Denmark, and the accusation, if it mean anything, must allude to those who governed in the name of Hardicanute, and, in that hypothesis, may reach Emma, or Godwin, or both. Yet would Harold, who was then all powerful, have subscribed to these charters, if they had cast so foul a stain on the memory of his father?"—Lingard.

[2] Saxon Chronicle, anno 1043.

Alfred's murder, though the Earl's chief object was evidently to throw off the odium of that crime from himself.

Far from being overcome by the sudden reverse in her fortune, and the serious accusations made by her enemies, Emma demanded justice, and wrote from her prison, at Wherwell, to different Archbishops and Prelates, asserting her innocence, and desiring to be put to the proof, professing herself willing to encounter any trial, even that of the fiery ordeal.[1] A Synod was accordingly convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury to examine into the charges against Queen Emma; on this occasion, the Bishops interceded in her behalf with the King, when Robert, the Archbishop, addressed them in the following terms, more forcible than delicate: "My brethren Bishops, how dare ye defend her, that is *a vile beast* and *not a woman;* who hath defamed her own son, the King; and called her leman, the Bishop, Christ her God. But, be it so, that the woman would purge the Priest, who shall then purge the woman, that is accused to consent to the death of her son, Alfred, and procured venom to the empoysoning of her son Edward?[2] But, how so it be, that she be guilty or guiltless, if she will go barefooted for herself over four ploughshares, and for the Bishop over five ploughshares, burning and fire-hot, then, if she escape harmless, he shall be assoiled of this challenge, and she also." This savage proposal was accordingly agreed to, and the day straightway appointed for Emma's purgation.

In those days, if a person was accused or suspected

[1] Podydore Vergil, Fabian, Grafton, Stowe, Milner, Boyle.

[2] This is a new charge, of having attempted the life of Edward himself, and Brompton also names it as such.

of crime, which could not be fully proved, he was put to his ordeal or trial, either by fire or water. The ordeal by fire was chiefly used for persons of rank. There were several kinds: the one which Emma underwent was, as follows:—Nine red-hot ploughshares were brought forth, and laid at unequal distances, and then the accused person having bare feet and eyes close blinded had to walk over them. If this was performed without touching the shares, the accused was instantly declared innocent; if not, GUILTY.

A woman might avoid being put to this proof, if she could find a champion to combat in her favour. Gunilda appointed her dwarf when accused. Few could fail to find a protector, when their honour was thus questioned; but Emma's was a rare case, and she herself seems to have felt so confident in her innocence, as to challenge being put to the most extreme proof in her own person.

Emma passed the night previous to her fiery trial in the Cathedral Church, where, at the tomb of St. Swithin, she remained in fervent prayer: she implored the aid of the Saint, and falling asleep was comforted by a dream, or vision, in which that Holy Prelate appeared to her, saying, "Be thou firm, daughter, I am Swithin, whom thou hast enriched; fear not, when thou passest through the fire, it shall not hurt thee, for thy son hath done evil in this." Emma arose refreshed and comforted, and all the preparations being completed, was led into the Church, and thus addressed the King:—"O Lord and Son, I, that Emma, who bore and brought thee forth, and Alfred my son, I invoke God to bear witness in my person this day, may I perish, if what has been charged against me,

ever even entered my mind." The King, the Bishops, and an immense multitude of persons of all descriptions were assembled in the Cathedral to be spectators of the event. The pavement of the nave having been swept, nine ploughshares, red with heat, were placed in a line upon it, "and now Emma," say the Chroniclers, "having again invoked the Almighty to deal with her accordingly, as she is innocent, or guilty, of the crimes laid to her charge, prepares herself for the trial, by laying aside her robes, and baring her feet. She is then conducted by two Bishops, one having hold of each of her hands, to the glowing metal. In the meantime, the vaults of the Church thunder with the voices of the assembled multitude, who, in loud shouts, call upon the Almighty to save the royal sufferer, and their cries are echoed through the whole city, by the crowds who were unable to gain admittance into the Church. She, herself, raising up her eyes to Heaven, and slowly walking on, thus makes her prayer:—'O God, who didst save Susannah from the malice of the wicked elders, and the three children from the furnace of fire, save me for the sake of thy Holy Servant Swithin, from the fire prepared for me.' In a word, she is seen to tread upon each of the burning irons, and is not even sensible that she had touched them, but addressing herself to the Bishops, 'when shall I come to the ploughshares? They turn round, and show her that she has already passed them. The lamentations of the multitude then ceasing, the air resounds with acclamations of joy and thanksgiving, still louder than their former prayers had been. The King alone is found overwhelmed with grief and bathed in tears, lying upon the ground beside his chair, to

whom Emma being conducted, he begs her forgiveness, in terms of the utmost humility and sorrow, for the injurious suspicions he had entertained concerning her, and the rigour with which he had treated her. Not content with this, he requires of her, and the Bishops then present, to strike him with a wand, which he presents to them. She accordingly gave her son three blows; when having embraced him, both she and Bishop Alwyn were put into full possession of their former rights and property, and ever after enjoyed the royal favour and respect, in the degree they merited."[1]

[1] Circumstantial as this strange narrative is, modern authors have endeavoured to refute the story altogether, stating that Emma's accuser, Robert, to blacken whose character it was invented, did not become Archbishop of Canterbury till 1050; others have pronounced it an invention of later times, resting on suspicious evidence, because the historians nearest the time do not name the circumstance. The "Encomium Emmæ," written by a monk of Emma's own times, would have been in this matter a valuable authority; but his record unluckily leaves off at the accession of Hardicanute. The Saxon Chronicle, regarding Emma as a private individual, neglects to name the fact, and the Latin historians are silent on a tale prejudicial to Edward. Brompton, Knyghton, Rudborne, and Harpsfield, relate the circumstance, and Robert of Gloucester, regarding it as a well-known fact, gives it a place with much minuteness in his Chronicle. Ranulf Higden, also a most accurate historian, related it at length in his Polychronicon, in the middle of the fourteenth century. In 1338, nearly the same date, it was sung amongst other popular songs relating to the history of Winchester, in the Prior's Hall there, at the translation of Orleton to that see. Everything considered, the annals of the church where the event occurred were most likely to contain the record, as in this instance was the case; and though Malmesbury does not mention the trial, he states that Emma was deprived of her lands by the King. The documents in Winchester Cathedral, moreover, prove that the Queen had given several manors to that church, which certainly she could not have done if they were not in her possession.—Milner.

The ploughshares over which Queen Emma had walked were, in memory of her extraordinary deliverance, buried in the west cloister of the Cathedral of Winchester.

The Queen and Alwyn, in gratitude for their acquittal of crime, each made a donation to the same church. Emma bestowed on it nine manors in her own behalf.

Alwyn likewise bestowed nine manors for himself.

King Edward made a donation to Winchester Cathedral at the same time, consisting of three manors.[1]

Emma, more fortunate even than her daughter Gunilda, thus triumphed completely over her enemies. But where was Robert the Archbishop, her accuser, when Emma returned thanks to God for her deliverance? The Archbishop "was absent," it is said, "from pity, or some other reason,"—most probably from shame for the defeat of his conspiracy against Emma, and mortification at the triumphant position she would obtain by her acquittal.[2]

Emma was, soon after this great event in her life, witness to the quarrels which ensued between the powerful personages who had been so violent in their enmity to her. Earl Godwin and Robert, the Norman archbishop, embroiled the country in their furious contentions; and the banishment of the first was followed by the expulsion of the second: on which Godwin, more than ever potent, returned to revenge his injuries, after a brief banishment.

[1] Dugdale.

[2] Bale says, "I do not find what became of the accusers of Queen Emma."—Historical Dictionary.

During these occurrences, the Queen seems to have preferred a safe retirement, in the possession of her wealth, to again entering the lists with the view of obtaining a mastery for which so many ambitious spirits were contending.

The indignity of her trial seems to have weighed heavily on her mind, and she buried her grief in the retreat of the cloister of St. Mary of Winchester, where, in March, 1052, the year after her triumph,[1] she died. Her death is thus mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle: "This year, in the second day before the nones of March, died the aged lady, Elfgiva Emma, the mother of King Edward and King Hardicanute, the relict of King Etheldred and of King Canut; and her body lies at Winchester, in the Old Minster, with King Canut."

Emma was, most probably by her own request, buried beside her Danish husband; in this particular King Edward testifying a respect he had failed to show to his mother when living; thus, the church that witnessed her trial, contained her remains. Her son Hardicanute also rested in Winchester Cathedral, by the side of his parents. The tomb of Emma bore an inscription in rude Latin lines, setting forth that the Queen who reposed there was wife to two, and mother to two English monarchs.[2]

Emma was great-aunt to William the Conqueror, that King being second cousin to her two sons, Edward the Confessor and Hardicanute; and, as such, entitled far more justly to the English crown than Harold, the son of Godwin, who built his claim on his own power,

[1] Lingard. [2] Echard.

and being brother of the Confessor's childless queen, the fair and harshly-treated Edith![1]

[1] At the disastrous siege of Winchester, during the reign of Stephen, the tomb of Queen Emma was destroyed, together with the "Abbey of St. Mary, twenty churches, the royal palace, lately erected in that quarter, the monastery of St. Grimbald, the suburbs of Hyde, and, in fact, nearly all the northern part of the city. The remains of the Queen were, however, preserved, and still rest within the walls of the Abbey, to which she was so great a benefactress. The screen which divides the sanctuary from the side aisles, Bishop Fox erected in 1525, and "on the top of the partition walls, and under the centre of each arch above are six mortuary chests, of carved wood, painted and gilt, and surmounted with crowns. These chests contain the remains of Saxon kings, prelates, and other distinguished personages interred in the cathedral, and are the work of Bishop Fox, who collected the bones from ancient lead coffins, which are supposed to have stood formerly in a similar situation.

The first chest from the altar-screen contains the bones of King Edred, and the second those of Edmund, son of Alfred; the third contains the mingled bones of King Canute, of Queen Emma, of King William Rufus, and of Bishops Wina and Alwyn. This chest has two inscriptions in Latin to this effect. On one side is the following:—

"In this, and in the other chest opposite, are the remaining bones of Canute and Rufus, Kings; of Emma, Queen; and of Wina and Alwin, Bishops."

And on the other side of this chest is the inscription:—

"In this chest, in the year of our Lord, 1661, were promiscuously laid together the bones of princes and prelates, which had been scattered about, with sacrilegious barbarity, in the year of our Lord, 1642."

So that nineteen years from the second spoliation of Emma's resting-place had passed away before the last mortal relics of the former fair "Pearl of Normandy" were restored to a consecrated and fitting position. The parliamentary soldiers, by whom the outrage had been committed of ravaging the cathedral in 1642, committed terrible depredations. "They broke in pieces the carved work of the choir, containing the story of the Old and New Testament, which was admirably executed. They totally destroyed the ancient

The struggles and vicissitudes of Queen Emma were many; and her character is one, which cannot be con-

organ; seized the rich tapestry, cushions, and vestments, in the choir, with the vessels of the altar; threw down the communion-table, and carrying off the rails which encompassed it, they burnt them in their quarters. They found a great number of Popish books, pictures, and crucifixes, in the prebendal houses, which, after a mock procession, were burnt, together with the organ-pipes, in the street. They defaced many of the monuments by tearing off their ancient brass inscriptions and other ornaments. They pulled down the mortuary chests containing the remains of Saxon kings, prelates, and other distinguished personages, and threw the bones at the stained glass, which they destroyed throughout the church, with the exception of that at the eastern window which had previously been taken out."

The first and second chests on the south side contain, as before-noticed, the bones of Kings Edred and Edmund. The former, who was the youngest son of Edward the Elder, was interred in the cathedral by directions of his friend St. Dunstan, and the chest has an inscription in Latin thus rendered :—

"King Edred died 955. In this tomb rests pious King Edred, who nobly governed this country of the Britons."

Edmund, eldest son of Alfred the Great, who was crowned and died during his father's life, was buried in the second chest. The Latin inscription runs thus in English ;—

"King Edmund died A.D. . . . . Edmund, whom this chest contains, and who swayed the regal sceptre while his father was living, do thou, O Christ, receive."

The third chest, on the south side, appropriated to Queen Emma, has been described already more particularly; and the first chest from the pulpit, on the north side, with its inscriptions, bones, &c., is similar to it. The second chest on the north side contains the remains of Kenewalch, who, with his father Kinegils, rebuilt the cathedral; and those of Egbert, founder of our English monarchy. One side has a Latin inscription, translated thus: "King Kenulph died A.D. 714." And the other side has this inscription: "King Egbert died A.D. 837. Here King Egbert rests, with King Kenulph. Each of them bestowed upon us munificent gifts."

templated without exciting reflection. By turns triumphant and persecuted, she offers a remarkable

The third chest, containing the remains of Kinegils, father of Kenewalch, the first Christian King of Wessex, and of St. Ethelwolf, father of Alfred the Great is thus inscribed: "King Kinegils died A.D. 641;" and on the other side, "King Adulphus died 857. In this chest lie together the bones of Kinegils and Adulphus. The first was the founder, the latter the benefactor, of this church."

The contents of these mortuary chests were examined a few years ago by Henry Howard, Esq., of Corby Castle, and other talented and learned gentlemen, from whose account the following was written by the late Dr. Milner, to whom the particulars of that investigation were forwarded.

"The first chest from the altar-screen, on the south side, inscribed Edred, contains many thigh bones and two skulls. The second chest, inscribed Edmund, contains five skulls, and three or four thigh-bones. One of the skulls, appears to have belonged to a very old man; another, also, belonged to a very old person. These, therefore, might have belonged to Wina and Alwin. The third chest on the south side, and the first chest from the pulpit, on the north side, bear the names of Canute, Rufus, Emma, Wina, Alwin, and Stigand. Neither of these contains any skulls; but they are full of thigh and leg bones; one set of which, in the third chest, is much smaller and weaker than the rest. This, with the supernumerary skull in the chest inscribed Egbert and Kenulph, might possibly have belonged to Queen Emma. The chest just referred to is the second from the pulpit, and contains three skulls, one of which is very small. One thigh-bone, wanting a fellow, is very stout, and measures nearly twenty inches long. But the two leg bones, one of which is rather deformed, and the two hip-bones belonging to this body, are in the chest, and answer exactly. There are also two other thigh-bones and two leg bones that pair; so that, with the exception of the third skull, these may be the bones of the aforesaid kings. The third chest from the pulpit, inscribed Kinegils and Adulphus, contains two skulls and two sets of thigh and leg bones. From a measurement of the skulls and thighs, it appeared that they were about the ordinary size. It should be observed that the skulls

instance of perseverance, courage, and ambition. Of human failing she had her share: her virtues were obscured by her too great desire of power, and she sacrificed much to obtain the end to which all her aspirations were directed. The most pleasing feature in her disposition is, her attachment to her husband Canute; with whose interests she identified herself, and for whose son she exerted all the energies of her powerful and active mind. She was less just to her children by her first marriage, but the circumstances of the time are a strong excuse for her conduct to them, as, of course, the suspicion of her causing the death of one must be at once dismissed.

That Emma was amongst the most remarkable personages of her period will be allowed by all, and her influence on the country over which she reigned, renders her biography one of the most interesting of any of the British Queens. The name of Queen Emma has been kept alive by tradition, and has more than once "adorned a tale."

As late as the year 1338, when Adam de Orleton,

actually at present in the chests are twelve in number, which is also the number of the names inscribed on the same chests.

"On the fine screen at the back of the capitular chapel in Winchester Cathedral, and opposite to the Chapel of the Virgin, is seen a range of canopied niches, in which formerly stood statues of the most eminent Saxon kings, from Kinegils to St. Edward, together with Canute, Hardicanute, Queen Emma, and, with them, Christ and the Virgin Mary."

Thus, huddled together, were the bones of friends and enemies, as if to show how useless and how full of folly are human contentions, which all have the same close, and, after a few years, are a mere matter of transient wonder and curiosity.

bishop of Winchester, visited his cathedral priory of St. Swithin, in that city, a minstrel, named Herbert, was introduced, who sung the song of Colbrond, a Danish giant, and the tale of "Queen Emma delivered from the Ploughshares," in the hall of the Prior, Alexander de Herriard.[1]

[1] Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. i., p. 81.

EDITHA "THE GOOD."

CONTENTS.

"Rose among thorns"—Earl Godwin's romantic and eventful story—The Jarl Ulf in the forest—The peasant-boy—King Canute's new soldier—His advancement—Marries Githa; made Earl—Thora and the slave trade—Bristol the mart—Godwin's connexion with royalty—Editha's beauty and meekness—The compact of Earl Godwin—Delays of King Edward—His dislike to the match with Editha—Their marriage—Edward's coldness—Dress and manners of the time—Splendour of priests—Wulstan's reproof—Long hair—Editha's humility—Her coronation—King Edward's vows—Unkindness to his Queen—The Queen's spiritual friends—Westminster Abbey founded—Editha's pious donations—Leofrina's will—Curious stone picture on the screen at Westminster Abbey—Quarrel of Tostig and Harold, when boys, represented—Installation of Leofric, Bishop of Exeter—Famine—Edward remits the tax of Danegelt—Rupture with Earl Godwin—Flight of Godwin and his family to Flanders—His banishment—Triumph of the Normans—Imprisonment of Queen Editha—Bishop Robert's accusation—A year of seclusion at Wherwell—Weakness of Edward—Godwin's triumphal return—Restoration of his party—The Queen returns to Court—Her triumph—Earl Godwin's sudden death—Edward sends for the son of Edmund Ironside—His arrival and death—Editha accused of cruelty—Royal chaplains—Dedication of Waltham Abbey—Bore-stall—Havering

Bower—The pilgrim and the ring—Dedication of St. Peter's, Westminster—The King's death—Harold succeeds—Battle of Hastings—William the Conqueror—Editha's epitaph.

AMIDST the scenes of strife and bloodshed which marked the eleventh century, the amiable and gentle-minded Queen Editha appears indeed, as one of our historians has observed, like "a rose among thorns." The placid and meek sport of party—her pious soul centred itself on that better world where strife entereth not, and discordant passions cannot dwell. Happy was it for this fair English flower, that, for the sake of others, she could dwell resigned in the midst of false splendour, and close the portals of her heart against those affections, which, in too many cases, make us lose the thoughts of hereafter, in the brief and passing joys of an earthly lot.

Editha was the daughter of that celebrated "King-maker," Earl Godwin, who played so distinguished a part in the violent contentions of the Danes and English which desolated the land for so many years. Her father's history is one of those which fill the pages of the past with romantic incident. From a humble position, he rose, first by accident, and afterwards by his genius and valour, to an equality with monarchs, to whom he became allied, and his enormous power swayed the destinies of nations, while kings were play-things in his hands.

After one of the five famous battles fought against the Danes by Edmund Ironside, in which that warlike prince had rescued London, and retrieved the wavering fortunes of his country,[1] a Danish jarl, named Ulf, who had

[1] Knytlinga Saga.

escaped from the scene of contest to a distance from his followers, lost his way in a wood, where, after wandering about through the whole night, he encountered at break of day, a young peasant with a drove of oxen:—"Ulf, having saluted him," says the chronicler, "inquired his name. 'I am called Godwin, son of Ulfnoth,' answered the shepherd, 'and thou, if I mistake not, art of the Danish army?' Thus forced to confess who he was, the Dane entreated the young man to inform him of his distance from the vessels which were stationed in the Severn, or neighbouring rivers, and the road he ought to pursue to gain them. 'Foolish indeed,' replied Godwin, is the Dane who expects his safety from a Saxon.' Ulf besought the shepherd, nevertheless, to leave his cattle and guide him, making him those promises of reward which would be likely to influence a poor and simple-minded man. 'The way is not long,' returned the Saxon, 'but it would be dangerous for me to lead thee into it. The peasants, encouraged by our victory of yesterday, are armed throughout the country, and would show no favour, neither to thee, nor to thy guide.'

"On this, the chief took a gold ring from his finger, and offered it to the peasant, who took it, and after contemplating it for a few moments, gave it back to him, saying, 'I will take nothing from thee, but I will try to conduct thee.'

"They passed the day in the cottage of Ulfnoth, Godwin's father; at night, when they were departing, the old man said to the Dane, 'Know, that it is my only son who trusts himself to thy honour: there will be no safety for him amongst his countrymen when he has served thee as a guide; present him, there-

fore, to thy King, that he may receive him into his service.'

"Ulf promised this and much more for Godwin, and he kept his word. When they arrived at the Danish camp, he made the peasant's son sit in his tent, on a seat as elevated as his own, and treated him in every respect as his son. He obtained a military command for him from King Canute, and in process of time, this identical Saxon shepherd rose to the rank of governor of a province in England which was occupied by the Danes, and was afterwards destined twice to destroy the foreign power by which he had risen.

"Godwin, from the first, by his promptitude and boldness, rendered service to Canute, and one of his early services was rewarded by the rank of Earl. This was on the occasion of Canute, then in Denmark, undertaking a campaign against the Vends. A battle was fixed for a certain day, with these barbarians, but Godwin, seeing that it was dangerous to lose time, ventured, without the King's knowledge, to attack the enemy the night before, whom he entirely routed and put to flight, thereby rendering an essential benefit to the cause of his commander, whose gratitude knew no bounds.

"On Canute's return to England the following spring, the counties of Kent, Sussex, and Surrey were given to the new Earl; and his services were, shortly after, further rewarded by the hand of Gyda, sister of Earl Ulphon,[1] who afterwards became mother of a numerous and promising family, and of these, one daughter, bearing the maternal name of Gyda or Editha, was destined to become the Queen-Consort of Edward the Confessor."

[1] Snorro.

Godwin had previously been married to a Danish princess, named Thora, by whom he had an only son afterwards drowned in the river Thames, into which he was thrown by an unruly horse. Thora is said to have been nearly related to Canute; she was not, however, the mother of Editha, nor is it desirable to know more of her as she is described as "a woman of much infamy, for the trade she drove of buying up English youths and maids to sell in Denmark, whereof she made great gain, but ere long was struck with thunder and died."[1]

The laws of Ethelred prove the horrible state of barbarity and cruelty existing in the country at this period, and the sermon extant of Lupus, (Bishop Wulfstan) written against the atrocities committed, is another evidence of the fearful consequence of the unsettled state of society. A traffic in slaves was carried on to an enormous extent. Bristol being one of the great marts, gaining at that early time a remarkable celebrity which the city kept to a late period, deserving the reproach of "her stones being cemented with blood." Greater cruelties were practised in England than amongst negro tribes, "brother sold brother, the father his son, the son his mother."[2]

Both Godwin's wives are spoken of as related to Sweyn, King of Denmark. According to Snorro, Ulf and his sister Gyda, were children of Thorkel Sprakalegg; Ulf had been placed over Denmark by Canute during his absence in England, he being the husband of Estrida, Canute's sister, the repudiated Duchess of Normandy, who at the time of Queen Emma's espousals had been united to her brother. The hand of Ulf's

[1] Milton. [2] Lappenberg.

sister, Gyda, was, therefore, likely to be the coveted prize of many a Saxon and Danish chief. By this alliance, Godwin beheld himself a second time closely united to both the English and Danish royal families, and with the children of Ethelred and Canute: and Sweyn Ulfson, afterwards King of Denmark, nephew of his wife Gyda, connected him still further with that country.

Queen Editha is universally represented as possessing great beauty and accomplishments. The ambitious views, as well as affection of her parents, had induced them to bestow on her an education surpassing that of her sex in general.[1] She had been brought up in the monastery of Wilton, distinguished for its learning, and afterwards noted as the spot selected for the education of "Good Queen Maude," wife of King Henry the First. While still at Wilton, Editha became remarkable for her acquirements, having a knowledge of books rarely attained in any age. As an instance of her taste for literature, Ingulphus relates that when he was a boy, his father being at King Edward's court, he had many interviews with the Queen, who would often stop him as he came from school, make him repeat his lesson, ask him questions in grammar and logic, and as a reward give him "a few pieces of silver, and send him to the larder."[2] Brompton tells us that "her breast was a storehouse of all liberal science," in which she differed greatly from the other members of her family, for neither Godwin nor his sons had any pretensions to literature. All our writers concur in praising her mental acquirements. Malmesbury calls her "a woman whose bosom was the school of every liberal art, though

[1] Burke's English History, Holinshed and others. [2] Lingard.

little skilled in earthly matters: on seeing her, if you were amazed at her erudition, you must absolutely languish for the purity of her mind and the beauty of her person."

Editha had been instructed in the popular art of needlework, in which she became quite a proficient. With her own hands the Queen is said to have wrought the magnificent robes[1] in which King Edward was accustomed to array himself on his collar-days or other great occasions; these were embroidered with gold in the most sumptuous manner. This King is described as being tall and well made in person, and possessing a white skin, fair hair, and a rosy complexion. Edward, in spite of his sanctity, delighted in the pomp of dress, in which he was not superior to the young men of his day. The age was one of singular taste for finery, even the clergy studying dress as much as the laity, and seeking to adorn their robes with richer furs than those worn by their neighbours. For this these prelates were reproved by Bishop Wulstan in these words: "Believe me, I never heard chanted *Cattus Dei*, but Agnus Dei."[2] Wulstan also boldly inveighed against the effeminate practice, then fashionable, of wearing long hair. When any one came to him to receive a blessing, and bowed

[1] The Domesday Book records that Leivede, a Wiltshire maiden, wrought in the time of King Edward *aurifrisium* for the King and Queen. This was a species of gold work, so much valued, that this same person held half a hide of land in Bucks, the grant of Godrei, the sheriff, that she might teach his daughter to make *orfrays*, for many centuries it was in fashion. The exquisite work of Editha has been noticed, and the garments of the Saxon hostages were a subject of surprise to the Normans, as the Conqueror's chaplain tells us: some of these specimens of needlework were left by Queen Matilda in her will to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity of Caen.

[2] Green's Worcester, p. 7.

down his head for that purpose, Wulstan, before he gave it, cut off a lock of his hair with a little sharp knife that he carried about him, and commanded him, by way of penance, to cut the remainder in a similar manner, denouncing heavy judgments against those who neglected to attend to his injunction.[1] The Saxon method of cutting and arranging the hair in the fourth century had the effect of enlarging the appearance of the face and diminishing the head. At a later period it was worn diffused upon the shoulders, and the man who seized another by the hair was punishable by law. In France great value was attached to the ornament of hair; it was even necessary to any prince to enable him to ascend the throne, in which the Franks and Saxons differed from the ancient Britons, whose princes cropped their hair like the monks. Great pains were lavished on the cultivation of the hair by the French, so that if any one could boast of a peculiarity in this respect, he obtained a suitable surname, as among the Danes Sweyn was called Forked-beard, and a whole nation was called Longobardi or Lombards.[2]

The kings and nobles, when in their state dress, were habited in a loose coat, which reached down to their ancles, and over that a long robe, fastened on both shoulders, and on the middle of the breast, with a clasp or buckle. The edges and bottoms of their coats, as

[1] Pictures of Edward the Confessor and his Queen, Editha, may be seen in Ducarel's Anglo-Norman Antiquities, in Strutt's Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities, and also in Caxton's Golden Legend. Harold's picture may also be seen in both these works. Edward the Confessor, as appears by his seal in Speed, wore very short cropped hair, but whiskers and beard exceedingly long.—Peck's Desiderata Curiosa.

[2] Turner's Anglo-Saxons.

well as of their robes, were often trimmed with a broad gold edging, or else flowered with different colours.

The soldiers and common people wore close cloaks reaching only to the knee, and a short cloak over the left shoulder, which buckled on the right; this cloak was often trimmed with an edging of gold. The kings and nobles, also, in common were habited in a dress very similar to this, only richer and more elegant.[1]

Editha, notwithstanding her great elevation, is said to have been very "humble, and at variance with no one." This "very beautiful, virtuous, and chaste princess was wholly exempt from the savage pride which distinguished her whole family,[2] and in a court filled with strife and contention behaved with mildness and benevolence to all around her; so that, however hostile the ancient writers have shown themselves to Godwin and his sons, they have done justice to Editha."

She deserved a better fate than to be united to a man who did not appreciate her virtues and who never could dissociate her from her father, whom he hated, suspecting or affecting to suspect him, to the last, of the murder of his brother, Prince Alfred. Edward was almost forced into his union with Editha, and was perfectly aware of Godwin's ambitious motives in raising his daughter to the throne of England. It was only on the condition of his promise of marriage with her, that the powerful Earl restored him.

Edward resembled his father in disposition, having a weak constitution by nature, and a narrow genius, so that it was not difficult for those who had their own private ends to promote, to obtain an ascendancy over his mind. As for Godwin, he had so much power at court, that as

[1] Strutt. [2] Lingard.

much deference was paid to him as to the King himself, although no real friendship existed between the Earl and his royal master. On one point the King was quite resolved, and that was to put off his marriage with Editha as long as possible, probably with a hope of evading it altogether. Pretext after pretext was devised as an excuse for this delay; but at length, at the expiration of two years, he was obliged to redeem the pledge he had given.

The nuptials were solemnized "ten days before Candlemas,"[1] A.D. 1044, Edward being then in the forty-fourth year of his age, much older than his bride. Although the fact is not exactly stated, it may be presumed that all the proud Godwin family were present at these triumphant espousals, including Githa and the many brothers of Editha, who are said afterwards to have obtained favour in the eyes of the King their brother-in-law, or, at least, to have appeared to do so.

The coronation of Editha soon followed, another triumph to the ambitious aspirations of Earl Godwin, whose aim was thus completely attained. A curious commentary on the deceptive glory of human successes is afforded in an account of the crown worn by Queen Editha on this and other state occasions: it is described in an inventory of that part of the regalia now removed from Westminster to the Tower Jewel House:—

"Queen Editha's crowne, formerly thought to be of massy gould, but upon triall found to be of silver gilt, enriched with garnetts, foule pearle, saphires, and some odd stones, p. oz. 50½, valued at 16*l.*"

If this account be true, it would almost seem as if Edward had intended thus early to affront the pride of

[1] Saxon Chronicle.

the Godwin family; but it is more likely that there was another crown used on the occasion, and that this was not the only one possessed by the Queen; or it might be, that the jewels had been changed. It is interesting to trace back to this epoch those different portions of the modern regalia which are used at the coronation of our English sovereigns:[1] the Sword, the Sceptre, the Orb, the Ring, &c., are all derived from Anglo-Saxon customs, at the ceremony of coronation. The investiture by the ring was one of the most ancient ways of conferring dignity, and the ancient Coronation Ring is called also "The Wedding Ring of England." The queen consort had also a ring provided for her coronation, which is of gold, with a large table ruby set therein, and sixteen other small rubies set round about the ring, of which those next to the setting are the largest, the rest diminishing in proportion. That the sword was carried at Arthur's Coronation has been already mentioned, and not one only, but four several swords, each borne by a separate person. There are still four swords used in the coronation of a British sovereign: 1st. The Sword of State; 2nd. The Curtana, or pointless Sword of Mercy; 3rd. The Sword of Spiritual Justice; 4th. The Sword of Justice of the Temporality.

At Queen Guenever's Coronation, four queens bore each in their hand a white pigeon, having, probably, an allusion to the feast of Pentecost. Whether the dove which surmounts the sceptre of the monarchs of Britain has the same allusion it is difficult to say. The first House of French Kings always bore for a staff a golden rod, being crooked at one end, to resemble the crosier

[1] Lingard.

or pastoral staff, and was the same height as the King who bore it. The Queen-Consort of England has a Virga or Ivory Rod, garnished with gold, rather more than a yard long, surmounted by a dove enamelled white.

St. Edward's Staff, so named from the husband of Editha, is still carried before the English sovereigns in the coronation procession. It is a golden sceptre or staff, four feet eleven inches long, having a foot of steel, about four inches in length, with a mound and a cross at the top. It is about three quarters of an inch in diameter, and the ornaments are of gold.

From Edward the Confessor's time also, every English sovereign has been represented on coins or seals as bearing a globe in the left hand. The orb or globe was assumed by Augustus, the Roman Emperor, and friend of Cymbeline, and implied universal dominion. Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, added a cross to the globe. The statue of Justinian is thus described: "In his left hand he held a globe, in which a cross was fixed, which showed that by faith in the cross, he was emperor of the earth. For the globe denotes the earth, which is of like form; and the cross denotes faith, because God in the flesh was nailed to it."

It might have been expected that Edward's union with a Princess possessed of so many attractions, and such sweetness of disposition as Editha, would have softened his feelings towards the Godwin family, and by degrees overcome his resentment: on the contrary, it proved but the cause of fresh strife with the Earl, and the hatred of the King towards him seemed transferred but the more bitterly to his daughter, because it could only be shown in that way. Editha could never acquire either the affections or confidence of her

husband, and, his tardy nuptials solemnized, the King, far from evincing any love for Editha, did not treat her as his wife; so that, although fear of the powerful Earl, her father, deterred Edward from discarding Editha from his throne, the marriage was a mere matter of form: though, attributing his conduct to an excess of self-negation, the titles of Saint and Confessor were afterwards accorded to him by the monkish chroniclers, and the most extravagant praises lavished on the virtuous example set by him, an example which, in those ages, called forth unqualified admiration.[1] It is indeed recorded, that at the time when Edward was importuned by his council to marry, he himself disclosed to Editha that he had bound himself to a life of celibacy, and should merely place her by his side on the throne:[2] William of Malmesbury declares he never could discover whether, in this instance, Edward acted from dislike to her family, which he prudently dissembled from the exigency of the times, or from motives of a pious nature:[3] but authors generally attribute his conduct rather to the first cause.[4] The smothered aversion he entertained for the Earl, was repeatedly exhibited in his treatment of Editha, his union with her being a daily recurring sting, showing the fear and forced submission under which he writhed. The gentle Queen resigned herself without a murmur to her husband's ill-treatment; and when she found all her endeavours to win the affections of Edward proved fruitless, she turned her thoughts solely to religion, and consoled herself by performing acts of devotion. Some, indeed, go so far as to say that Editha was perfectly agreeable

[1] Hume, William of Malmesbury.
[2] Lingard. [3] Holinshed. [4] Grafton.

to King Edward, but that her feelings being the same as his own, they mutually agreed to live on these distant terms. Edward was popular with the whole nation, and he is represented by his friends, the monks, as possessed of such great patience, that he could scarcely ever be put in a passion.[1] He was, besides the "father of the poor, and protector of the weak, more willing to give than to receive, and better pleased to pardon than to punish." The Queen is said also to have distinguished herself by her generosity.

In one point, certainly, Edward and his Queen were agreed, the patronage of the church and its holy prelates. Leofstan, Abbot of St. Albans, is spoken of as the friend, confessor, and counsellor of both Edward and Editha:[2] to the former he filled the office of chaplain, and between this prelate and Queen Editha was a strict friendship.[3]

An old register of the Church of Worcester testifies how "Agelwin, Dean of Worcester, and his brother Ordric, gave three lassats of land *in Cundicotan* to the monks there, which grant is confirmed by Edward,[4] and then Queen Editha."[5]

One of the earliest undertakings of King Edward after his marriage, was the foundation of that noble structure, the Abbey of Westminster. While yet an exile in Normandy, the son of Ethelred had vowed, in case of his obtaining the crown of his ancestors, that he would undertake a pilgrimage to Rome; and now that he was firmly seated on the throne, he did not forget this vow. It had been a subject of meditation until the year 1043, when he summoned his nobles

[1] Hallam. [2] Dugdale. [3] Weever.
[4] Lingard. [5] Carter and Dugdale, Selden.

and clergy, and informed them of his intentions. It was suggested that to go to Rome in person would be dangerous both to himself and to his kingdom, but that ambassadors should be sent to the Pope to obtain a dispensation. This advice was adopted by Edward, and the dispensation granted, on condition that the money intended to be spent on the journey should be given to the poor, and that the King should either erect a new monastery, or repair some old one to the honour of St. Peter. On this King Edward caused his whole estates and possessions to be decimated and appropriated to the pulling down the ruined Saxon Church which King Sigebert had built, and erecting in the same place a stately fabric, instead of the money being expended, as he had purposed, in a pilgrimage to Rome.

The earliest charter to the monastery is dated A.D. 1045, and signed first by the King, then by his mother "Alfgitha," and thirdly by Editha, his Queen. It would, therefore, seem that both ladies were present at the donation of the charter, and that the proud Norman widow of Ethelred and Canute took precedence in this instance, as perhaps in others, of her gentle daughter-in-law, the child of her old rival, Godwin.

Edward likewise founded that Church of St. Margaret, which now stands without the Abbey. "The old Church of St. Margaret standing in the way of the cloisters which were to be erected for the Abbey of St Peter, the King caused it to be pulled down, and the present building erected."[1]

The erection of the Church of St. Peter was certainly the great event of Edward's reign: it occupied a space of twenty years, and was only finished at the close of

[1] Dart's Westminster.

his career. While the King was occupied in directing the new building at Westminster, an object zealously seconded by his amiable consort, Editha began and completed an abbey of stone at Wilton, in lieu of the wooden one in which she had been educated, most of the early Saxon buildings being constructed of wood;[1] this circumstance marks the Queen's attachment to the spot in which her earlier years, probably the happiest portion of her life, had been passed.[2]

Editha appears to have had considerable property in England for her own private use, so that she was able to indulge her wishes in respect to pious donations and charities.

Her estates were very numerous, and situated in almost every county in England. In Somersetshire alone, she held Milverton, Twiverton, Crewkerne, Luckham, Bruiton, and Chewton Mendip, manors which yielded an annual sum of 100*l.*[3] Martock likewise, also in the same county, and Camel-Queens, so named from being vested in the queens of this realm. This place, at the Norman Survey, yielded 23*l.* of white money. Rivenhall, in Essex, also formed part of Editha's estates; so also was Bath (called Bade in Domesday Book). Wycombe, in Bucks, which was worth 12*l.* per annum, belonged to Editha; and Buthric held that manor, as her tenant,[4] during Edward's reign.

[1] Wilton nunnery was first built by St. Alburg, sister of Egbert, for an abbess and twelve nuns; the number of the latter was increased by Alfred the Great to twenty-six.

[2] Domesday Book, Britton and Brayley, Collinson.

[3] Camden relates this on the authority of Mr. Douce in his account of Wilton. That author says he found it in a Life of Edward the Confessor.—Dugdale.

[4] Langley's History and Antiquities of Desborough

Notwithstanding she was the possessor of all these rich territories, Editha, on one occasion, manifests something of the acquisitive spirit of the Godwin race in laying claim to the town of Fisherton, which Leofrina, "a London lady," had bequeathed by her will to the Abbey of Peterborough. Editha disputed this donation, and laid claim to the village in question, which she pretended Leofrina had decreed to her. A contest ensued, which terminated in the Abbey paying forty marks of gold to the Queen, and forty marks more in the ornaments of the church.[1] Leofrina was on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, at the time of her death, about A.D. 1060. She is noticed by Stowe among his "Worthy Acts of Women:"[2]

"The royal duty or revenue, known by the name of Queen Gold, and which belongs to every queen of England during her marriage to the king, was first paid to Queen Editha. This money is due and payable by persons in this kingdom and Ireland, on divers grants of the king, by way of fine or oblation, &c., and is one full tenth part above the entire fines on pardons, contracts, or agreements, which becomes a real debt to the queen, by the name of AURUM REGINÆ, upon the party's bare agreement with the king for his fine, and recording the same."[3]

[1] Stowe's London. [2] Ency. Brit.

[3] Selden, who names the duty called "Aurum Reginæ," mentioning the following privileges attached to the queenly dignity in England: —Divers prerogatives also are allowed in our laws to the Queen-wife, as those of making gifts or contracts, or suing without the King, and receiving by gift from her husband (which no other *femme coverte* may do), having her courts and officers, as if she were a sole person; that if the King or she be plaintiff, the summons in the process need not have the solemnity of fifteen days, which is

For some time after the marriage of Edward, peace was preserved between him and Earl Godwin, whose family were admitted to familiar communion with him and the Queen. During this interval, an incident occurred considered so worthy of note at the time as to be recorded in imperishable stone. It is represented in the eighth compartment of the screen of King Edward the Confessor, in Westminster Abbey,[1] and presents to the eye, as well as to the mind, a picture of manners very remarkable. Tosti and Harold, the sons of Godwin, had a quarrel at the King's table; and, in the sculpture, "the contending brothers are shown in the foreground of the design, whilst Earl Godwin and the King and Queen are on the opposite side of a table, on which is a covered cup, with several articles of food. The quarrel between the sons of Godwin, who were yet boys, arose in consequence of the envious jealousy of Tosti at the King's drinking to Harold, his younger brother, in preference to himself. Harold, by superior

extended also to their children, brothers, sisters, and *à ses parens*, as Bracton says, and such like. It is also treason to plot against her life.—Selden's Titles of Honour.

The duty was suspended during the reign of Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth, there being no queen-consort for sixty years: it was claimed by the Queens of James the First and Charles the First.—Sir H. Ellis's Introduction to Domesday Book.

[1] Lambard's Topographical Dictionary, article "Wynsore." That the Queen was present when Harold and Tosti quarelled is confirmed by Caxton. Holinshed says it happened at Windsor the last year of Edward's reign. A MS. written in the time of Edward the First, and illuminated with great care, represents this famous quarrel, and has been copied in Strutt's Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities, where may be seen the picture of Queen Editha. Snorro tells us that Harold, Godwin's youngest son, "was brought up at Edward's court, and was his foster-son. The King loved him very much, and kept him as his own son, for he had no son."

strength, after Tosti had caught him by the hair and pulled him violently to the ground, recovered his feet, "and layed migntie blowes upon his brother, so that the King himself was fayne to put his hand and to separate them."[1] He then foretold the calamities which would befal the realm through the contention of the brothers, when arrived at manhood, and intimated their untimely and respective fates. The outline of this relation is corroborated by different historians. The designs for the singular sculptures upon the screen in Westminster Abbey have been chiefly deduced from Ailred's account of the Life and Miracles of King Edward, which was written in the time of Henry II., and presented to that monarch by Abbot Lawrance, on the very day, A.D. 1163, when, in honour of his recent canonization, the Confessor's remains were removed into a new shrine."

One of the remarkable and interesting records left of Queen Editha is that which concerns the Installation of Leofric, as first Bishop of Exeter. King Edward removed the Bishop's See from St. Germanus, at Crediton, to Exeter; and Editha, with her husband, assisted to instal Leofric, already Lord Chancellor of England and a member of the King's Privy Council, as the first abbot of that church. The installation took place on the 27th of May, A.D. 1049, in the sixth year of the reign of Edward. As an instance of the great favour and honour which the bishop received from both the King and Queen at his instalment, we may quote the words of King Edward's Charter, viz.: "I, King Edward, taking Bishop Leofric by the right hand, and Edith, my Queen, by the left, do instal him the first

[1] Neale's Westminster Abbey.

and most famous Bishop of Exeter, with a great desire of abundance of blessings to all such as should further and increase the same; but with a fearful and execrable curse upon all such as should diminish or take anything from it;" and within the quire, adjoining the high altar, is a monument, fairly arched, and under the same arch are three seats with side pillars of brass, erected in memory of the said King Edward, Edith his Queen, and Leofric, the first Bishop of Exeter; the middle of them being the seat of the said bishop, sitting in his pontificals between the King and the Queen.[1]

The year 1051[2] was signalized by one of the most dreadful famines ever known in England. A quarter of wheat rose to sixty pennies, a sum equal to fifteen shillings of our present money; consequently it was as dear as if it now cost 7*l.* 10*s.*, and far exceeded that great dearth in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when a quarter of wheat was sold for 4*l.*[3] Thousands were perishing for want, and it was the sight of the misery of the people on this occasion that led the King to repeal the heavy and odious tax called the Danegelt.[4] The mind of Edward was first attracted to the circumstance by his Queen Editha; who, one day, accompanied by her brother Harold, conducted him into the royal treasury where the vast amount of this collected tax had been deposited. Edward was so affected by

[1] Dugdale, Weever, Isaacke's Antiquities of Exeter, Speed.

[2] A snow-storm fell this year, in January, so deep that it covered the ground to the middle of March, causing cattle and fowls in abundance to perish; and the next year was remarkable for an earthquake, and lightnings which burnt up the cornfields and produced a dearth.—Howel, Med. Hist. Angl.

[3] Hume.

[4] Hoveden and Ingulphus, Sharon Turner.

the sight of this large sum at such a moment of national affliction, that he immediately ordered the money to be restored to its former owners, and no more to be raised on such an assessment. Few incidents in the life of Editha show her character in a more humane and amiable light than this instance of blessed pity.

In the year previous to the famine, an open rupture took place between Earl Godwin and the King, on the occasion of Eustace, Earl of Boulogne, the husband of Goda, King Edward's sister, having landed at Dover, and unjustly and tyrannously treating the inhabitants—forcing them to provide dwellings for himself and his men—a fray with the townsmen ensuing, in which many were killed. The foreigners, being overcome by the people of the country after a loss of eighty men, fled to Gloucester to the King, complaining of their wrongs. Earl Godwin, who took the part of the English, but could not convince King Edward, assembled a large army and marched into Gloucestershire, threatening to make war on his sovereign unless Eustace and all his men were delivered into his hands. The King refused, and commanded Godwin to repair to court and account for his conduct. The royal order not being obeyed, Edward, by sentence of his court, banished Godwin and his five sons from England. Accordingly, the Earl and his wife, their son Tosti and his wife Judith, daughter of Baldwin Earl of Flanders, with Sweyn and Gurth, also sons of Godwin, took shipping, with immense treasures, and went to Flanders, to Earl Baldwin. Harold and Leofwin went to Bristol, and crossed the sea into Ireland: there they took refuge with King Donough, who is said to have espoused Driella, their

sister. The Irish King received his English relatives with much honour, and they remained in Ireland all that winter, "on the King's security." The following year, Donough assisted them with a squadron of nine ships, or, as some say, a considerable body of land forces, with which they made a successful landing in Britain.[1] Of Donough, it is related that he either introduced first into Ireland, or encouraged, the custom of celebrating games or athletic sports on the Sabbath-day; the cœtus, or gloves, used by the pugilists, being distributed, as it is said, in the King's own mansion,[2] perhaps, by the hand of the fair Driella. This was plainly done in honour of the day, and not a desecration of its duties; for, another author tells us that, this king was a scrupulous observer of the sabbath, and forbade any one to carry burdens, or hold hunting matches or fairs on that day. Some have thought that the marriage of Driella, and flight of many English nobles to Ireland, in consequence of William the Conqueror's tyranny, where the Saxon protection, through her influence, was to be found, occasioned an improved knowledge of architecture in that country.[3]

The King had not only banished Godwin and his sons, but caused their estates to be confiscated. These were enormous,[4] and spread over numerous counties.

As might have been expected, the disgrace of her family involved also that of Editha; but it was necessary to have some form of accusation against her, which was not long wanting to her enemies. The usual pretence of infidelity to the King, a common resource against a defenceless woman, was set up, the accuser

[1] Moore, O'Halloran.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Grose's Antiquities.
[4] Roger of Wendover.

chosen being Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury. This man was a native of Normandy and monk of Jumièges, who had been known to King Edward during his exile abroad, and whom he had invited to England. After his arrival he was made Bishop of London, and subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury.[1] Of this prelate Speed remarks, "I am fully persuaded that the accusation with which Editha was charged by Robert, the Archbishop, was more upon envy to her father than truth of so foul a fact in her whose virtues were so many and so memorable, by report of authors that were eye-witnesses." The charge would be unworthy of notice but for the consequences to the innocent Queen, who on her death-bed, as well as at the time, protested that it was entirely false; her whole course of life was sufficient to prove this, even if the motives of Edward had not been as transparent as they were. His vengeance against Earl Godwin, whether merited or not,—and in this instance it was ill-directed,—could not be complete without his daughter sharing his punishment.

Infamous and unjust as this accusation of the Archbishop was, Editha was treated most rigorously by the King her husband, who not only expelled her from his court, but subjected her to every possible disgrace. All her goods were taken from her, and, stripped of her lands, furniture and money, in which she shared the fate of the whole Godwin family, Editha was committed a prisoner to the Monastery of Wherwell, in Hampshire. The sister of King Edward presided over this establishment, and that abbess was appointed to keep her prisoner "very strictly;" one solitary female alone of

[1] William of Malmesbury.

all her train being permitted to attend on the deposed Queen. The King's Norman favourites indulged in scoffs and jeers at her expense, remarking, "that it was not fit that at the time when her family were suffering banishment, she herself should sleep on down." So many contradictions occur in early history, that, although some writers have recorded the severe treatment experienced by Editha, a contemporary historian affirms that on this distressing occasion the poor Queen was conducted with royal pomp to Wherwell, and informed that her confinement there was only a measure of temporary precaution.[1] As the author of this statement dedicated his work, which was the Life of King Edward, to Queen Editha, it deserves to have some weight. The circumstance would show Edward's own conviction of the Queen's innocence, and how little she merited harsh treatment. There is a clear proof also in his abandoning himself to the rule of Archbishop Robert at this epoch, as he had formally resigned himself to that of Godwin, that he required the direction of some master-mind, and was "steered by each pilot according as the rudder of his destiny was turned." Under the influence of the Archbishop's faction, it seemed by this sudden stroke on the fortune of Editha, that Edward's intention really was never again to receive back his wife, and that, although till now he had preserved fair terms with the daughter of his enemy's hated house, he had parted from her at the very first moment that he could do so with safety to himself.[2]

Editha's accusation and punishment were similar to those of Queen Emma, who received at the hands of her

[1] Quoted by Stowe p. 96, and alluded to by Dr. Lingard.

[2] Rapin.

son no better treatment than his wife, and the same convent received both. However gratified Queen Emma might have been to have seen the ruin of the man who had alternately been her bitterest enemy and her ally, she could scarcely help sympathizing with her innocent daughter-in-law, the victim of the enmity of the same Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had been instrumental in her own degradation, signal as the victory she obtained over him had been.

Editha bore her wrongs more meekly, and made no appeal to the fiery ordeal which Queen Emma had passed through; perhaps, aware of her father's real power and the love borne to him by the English, as well as their hatred of the Norman favourites, she looked forward to his return and her own restoration; and these hopes supported her through a whole year, in spite of the natural tears which she shed during the forced retreat to which her husband's weakness and cruelty had condemned her.

But though Godwin, taken unawares, had submitted for a time to the force of circumstances, it was not to be expected that so powerful a leader, and one so popular in the country, would be content to abandon his possessions and his sway to the Norman favourites of the irresolute and priest-governed Edward. The struggle was soon renewed, and this time conducted with so much skill and vigour that, after a series of defeats and mortifications, Edward was obliged to succumb. The strong feeling of the nation was in favour of Earl Godwin, whose disgrace was felt to have taken place in consequence of his having defended the rights of the people against the oppression of the insolent Normans, and the King found himself unable to stand against the

pressure. The Anglo-Danish yoke had, by this time, become light to the English. Canute had been admired and esteemed; but the foreign notions of Edward which condemned everything English, habits, customs, and language, had disgusted the people with his court. The illtreatment of Editha, the daughter of their popular chief, rankled in their minds; so far from molesting him, they declared for Godwin, from every part of the coast along which his fleet paused to ask for supplies, and when they found that a powerful fleet from Ireland, under the conduct of one of his sons, had re-inforced his army, the whole country rushed to his side. The Welsh, glad of an opportunity to revenge old feuds, joined with the strongest party, and England was once more in the control of Godwin.

Then commenced a headlong flight on the other side: "there was mounting in hot haste"—the Norman favourites, seized with panic, rushed for their lives to their ships, got on board at any sacrifice, and left the King and his capital to the successful Earl. Edward was forced to appear content after having stood stiffly out as long as it was possible, and the end of all this confusion, bloodshed, and devastation, was Godwin's entire restoration to all his honours and possessions, the expulsion of Robert the Archbishop, and all the Normans in power, and the return, with suitable pomp and circumstance, of the disgraced Queen Editha.[1]

All now seemed prosperous with the family of Godwin, and Editha's heart was relieved of the burthen of sorrow which had lately nearly crushed her. Nothing was now to be heard but rejoicing; and festivals, both courtly and religious, filled up the time of the triumphant

[1] Saxon Chronicle, William of Malmesbury, &c.

party. It was at one of these, which took place at Easter, at Winchester, that while sitting at table with the King, the Queen and all the court, in the midst of conviviality,[1] Earl Godwin was suddenly seized with a fit of apoplexy and fell speechless to the ground. He was borne from the chamber by his sons Tostig and Harold, and after a few days' extreme agony, expired.

By Norman writers whose enmity to his house of course induced misrepresentation and who delight in striking scenes, the story of Earl Godwin's death has been differently related. According to them one of the royal cupbearers, when presenting wine, happened to stumble with one foot and saved himself from falling with the aid of the other, on which Godwin exclaimed: "Thus brother helps brother." Edward, from whose mind no asseverations, public or private, could efface the impression of Godwin's guilt, looked sternly at him and said: "Yes—and had Alfred lived, so might he have helped me." Godwin, indignant at the imputed charge, replied: "I know that you still suspect me of your brother's murder, but may God, who is true and just, not permit this morsel of bread to enter my throat without choking me if he suffered death or injury from me or by my counsel."

Having said this, the King blessed the bread, but the instant the Earl put it in his mouth, it choked him.[2] "Thus," adds the chronicler, "did Providence expose and punish the traitor and murderer."

If such a scene really took place, no doubt the passion of Godwin on finding that, under whatever circumstances they met, Edward persisted in casting the same crime in

[1] Saxon Chronicle. [2] Saxon Chronicle, 1053, 15th April.

his teeth, was the cause of the apoplexy which seized him on the instant. Such events have been frequent when persons are violently excited, particularly after being heated at an entertainment in times when conviviality was carried to excess.

Godwin was so little a friend to the Church, and Edward was so completely the tool of Churchmen, that it naturally follows that the former should suffer in the report of those historians who look upon Edward as a saint. The death of the Earl happened at an unfortunate juncture, and great was the lamentation throughout England for the great "Child of Sussex," as he was called.[1]

Probably, if Edward had dared to do so, the family of the man he detested would again have suffered from his violence; but the times were altered, and all he could do was now to secure himself and endeavour to settle the succession on those nearest him in blood. He sent, therefore, to the Emperor, Henry III., at Cologne, requesting that the son of Edmund Ironside, whom he protected, and who had married his niece, might

[1] The famous Godwin, or Goodwin, Sands, formerly part of the Earl's domain, off the coast of Kent, lie between the North and South Foreland; and, as they run parallel with the coast for three leagues together, at about two leagues and a half distant from it, they add to the security of that spacious road, the Downs; for, while the land shelters ships with the wind from south-west to north-west only, these sands break all the force of the sea, when the wind is at east-south-east. The most dangerous wind, when blowing hard on the Downs, is the south-south-west.—Ency. Brit.

The lands were given to the Monastery of St. Augustine at Canterbury, and the Abbot, neglecting to keep in repair the wall that defended them from the sea, the whole tract was drowned in the year 1100, leaving these sands so great, yet so fatal a safeguard to the coast.

come over to him in England. After some delay, the Prince accordingly arrived with his wife Agatha and his children, Edgar Atheling, Margareta, and Christina, but he died almost directly after, suddenly, in London.

Meantime, Harold, the son of Godwin, was fighting against the usurper Macbeth, of famous memory, in the North, and succeeded to the Earldom of Siward of Northumberland, in whose cause he had drawn the sword. A long series of contentions occupied him till after tranquillity was temporarily restored, he set out for Normandy on the errand which threw him into the intimacy of Duke William, so fraught with consequences to himself and England.

Whether any change came over the spirit of Queen Editha, after the calamity of losing her father, and whether she conceived it necessary to exercise a rigour and vigilance which appeared hitherto foreign to her nature,[1] it is difficult to determine; but she has been accused of abandoning her accustomed mildness, and acting with cruelty about this time. Most probably the acts of which she is accused should rather be attributed to her brothers, Tosti or Harold, who then swayed Northumberland. It appears that certain retainers of a Northumbrian chief were murdered in the court of Edward, and "the Queen's orders" are cited as giving sanction to the fact. "Even this fair rose was stained with blood,"[2] says an annalist; but it does not follow that she is guilty of more than severity, dictated by the representations of her brothers. The alleged treachery of Tostig has not been confuted, and this act was, doubtless, but a feature of the tragedy in which he performed.

[1] Rapin.

[2] Turner, Holinshed.

Tosti having allured some Northumbrian nobles to his own chamber, in his palace at York, under pretence of concluding a peace, had caused them to be assassinated. These atrocities, and the imposition of a severe tax, caused the Northumbrians to arm against the Government. Tostig was surprised at York, and escaped by flight: his treasures and armoury were pillaged, and two hundred Danish and English guards, with their leaders, Amund and Ravensworth, being made prisoners, were led out of the city and massacred in cold blood on the north bank of the Ouse. Morcar and Edwin were placed by the insurgents at their head; they were met by Harold, who, having inquired into their demands, obtained the King's assent to them. These were to confirm the laws of Canute, and appoint Monar Earl of Northumberland. Tostig, dissatisfied at this peace, repaired to Bruges, the usual asylum of his family.[1]

The establishment of chaplains in the royal household is of very ancient date, and even in the Pagan times we find priests attendant on their regal patrons. Editha and her brother Harold had their chaplains. Walther, afterwards Bishop of Hereford, filled this office with the Queen; he was appointed to that see, and an instrument issued for the temporalities of Hereford in the year 1060, having previously been consecrated at Rome, together with Aldred, Archbishop of York, and Gisa, Bishop of Wells, the King's chaplain (April 4th, 1059).

Gisa was, as well as Walther, a native of Lorraine, and is said to have been treated with the utmost consideration by Queen Editha. It appears that, when Harold, Earl of Wessex, was banished by Edward,

[1] Holinshed, Lingard, &c.

the King bestowed his possessions on the Church of Wells. Harold afterwards made a piratical descent in those parts, and having raised contributions among his former tenants, despoiled the church of its ornaments, drove away the canons, invaded their possessions, and converted them to his own use.[1] In vain had Gisa, who, on entering into his new diocese, found the church estates in a sad condition, expostulated with his royal patron on this outrageous usage, but the more generous and considerate Editha, bestowed on Gisa the manors of Mark and Mudgley as in part compensation for the injuries his bishopric had sustained through her brother's depredations. Harold,[2] on being restored to favour, procured Gisa's banishment, and still later, when on the throne, he resumed the estates of which he had formerly been deprived. That William the Conqueror recalled Gisa from exile, and with some trivial exceptions, restored to the Church of Wells all Harold's estates, was one of the many proofs he gave of his respect for Queen Editha, that prelate's generous benefactress.

Of the King's Chamberlain, or Thane of the Bower, "Bar-Theyn," an incident is on record, which gives a trait of Edward's character, more simple than just, and more good-natured than prudent; this officer was the appointed keeper of the King's purse, and bore the name of Hugoline. "It chanced that Edward was

[1] Collinson's Somersetshire.

[2] Leofgar, chaplain of Harold, preceded Walther in the see of Hereford, and had scarcely become a bishop when he forsook his chrism and rood, his spiritual weapons, and took to his spear and sword, and so going to the field against Griffith, the Welsh King, was slain, together with many of his priests.

lying in bed, and, as it appears, in the daytime, when the chamberlain came in and busied himself about the chest which held the King's money, either putting somewhat in, or taking somewhat out; and then he quitted the room, forgetting to lock the chest. The King saw him, and so did the little scullion-boy, who, fully persuaded that the Confessor was asleep, crept softly to the tempting hoard, and filling his bosom with the gold, he softly stole away. The King saw him, but said naught. Having safely deposited his acquisition, he ventured a second time into the King's chamber, made a second attempt, and was equally successful. The King saw him, but said naught. A third time he approached the hoard, and then Edward, alarmed, not for the safety of the money, but for the safety of the thief, exclaimed, 'Have a care, boy, and be off with what thou hast; for if Hugoline finds thee out, not a penny will he leave thee!'"

The lord chamberlain still displays the "key," as the token of the office.[1]

In 1062, Editha assisted at the dedication of Waltham Abbey. The estate of Waltham, which had devolved on the crown, had been bestowed by Edward the Confessor on his brother-in-law Harold, with a considerable grant of land. Harold rebuilt or enlarged the monastery, for the purpose of keeping a holy cross, said to have been miraculously brought thither, and richly endowed it as a college for a dean and eleven secular black canons. In King Edward's Charter of Confirmation, dated 1062, it is stated that Harold having founded a monastery to the holy faith, the King caused it to be honourably dedicated according to the due form

[1] Palgrave.

and order of a holy church of God, "in the remembrance," so it is expressed, "of me and my wife, named Editha," for the founder himself, his father and mother, and for all related to him in consanguinity, whether living or dead; and Harold bestowed seventeen lordships on this foundation, all which King Edward, to redeem his own and his predecessor's sins, confirmed to the Abbey, free of all suit and service, and with ample privileges, which he signed and sealed with the holy cross himself, together with his Queen Editha, and fifty-six of his great men. An immense number of rich and precious gifts were also bestowed by the noble founder on the Abbey.[1] In the Royal Charter appear the names of Stigand, Archbishop of Dover, and Harold, to which are added those of the King and Queen.[2]

The leisure of King Edward was divided between prayer and the chase; the latter always a favourite pastime with our Saxon monarchs. At Brill, in Buckinghamshire, was a palace to which King Edward would frequently resort that he might have the pleasure of hunting in Bernwood Forest. At that time the forest was much infested by a wild boar, which at length was fortunately slain by a huntsman of the name of Nigel. This person the King rewarded for his service by a grant of some lands, which he was to hold by a horn, a mode of livery common in those days, and of which an instance has already been given in these volumes. "On the land thus given Nigel built a large manor-house, called *Borestall*, or Borstall, in memory of the event through which he obtained possession." This estate has descended

[1] Ogborne's Essex. [2] Fuller's History of Waltham.

in uninterrupted succession, by several heirs female, from the family of Nigel to that of Aubrey, and the original horn by which it was conveyed to the former is in the possession of Sir John Aubrey, Bart., as well as a folio volume, composed about the reign of Henry the Third, containing transcripts of papers relating to the manor, with a rude delineation of the site of Borstall House and its contiguous lands, beneath which is the figure of a man on one knee, presenting a boar's head on the point of a sword to the King, who is returning him a coat of arms. The horn is of a dark brown colour, variegated and veined like tortoise-shell; the ends are tipped with silver, and fitted with wreaths of leather to hang round the neck."[1]

Edward the Confessor built also for himself, in Essex, in a well-wooded locality, which from its solitude was suited to devotion, a goodly residence, or hunting-seat, known by the name of Have-he-Ring, or Take-the-Ring, as it would be rendered in modern English; at the time he resided there—whether alone or with the Queen, is not recorded—being, as it is said, troubled in his devotions by the sound of the nightingales, he humbly besought from God their absence, from which time forward "the song of the bird" was never more heard, except beyond the pales of his park, where, as in other places, they would abundantly resort.[2] Of Havering this legend is on record:—An aged pilgrim, from Jerusalem, solicited alms from King Edward, who, his almoner not being present, drew a

[1] Britton and Brayley. This curious plan and a representation of the horn have been engraved in the third volume of the Archæologia, whence many of the above particulars were derived.

[2] Camden.

ring from his finger, and presented it to the mendicant. This ring was afterwards returned by the pilgrim to certain Englishmen, in the East, to be restored to King Edward, with this message, that he had given it to St. John the Evangelist, who sent it back to him to inform him of the day on which it was appointed that he should die: the day named was January 5th, 1062. Accordingly, in passing through Westminster Cloisters into the Dean's Yard, you may see the King and Pilgrim cut in stone over the gate.[1] It is said that when the King received the pilgrim's message, he was taken ill, that he distributed his wealth to the poor, and prepared himself for the close of his earthly career. One subject, however, had for a long time pressed on the mind of the monarch; the completion of that grand undertaking, the Abbey of St. Peter's, Westminster. Edward had determined that the church should be dedicated in the most solemn and impressive manner, and for that purpose had convened a general assembly of all the bishops and great men in the kingdom, to be witnesses of the ceremony. It was the last Christmas festival which the pious monarch was destined to celebrate, memorable to his own and succeeding ages by the fact of this consecration and opening of an edifice, the building of which, had occupied his entire reign. A splendid festival was to be held in the adjoining palace, to which all the nobles were invited.

On the vigil of Christmas the King was attacked by the fever, which ultimately proved fatal.[2] For the three following days he combatted the violence of the disease by a firmness and affected cheerfulness, which were

[1] Hearne, Caxton. [2] Lingard.

shown in his holding his court as usual, and presiding at the royal banquet.[1]

The festival of the Innocents[2] was that which had been fixed on for the dedication of the new church, that edifice which had been so long and anxiously superintended during its progress by the monarch. When the day arrived, Edward was unable to quit his chamber, but would not delay the ceremony on that account. In the absence of her husband, it was the delegated office of Queen Editha to take charge of the decorations, and become his representative;—"providing all, arranging all, superintending all, she acted for both King and Queen."[3] On the same day the grand Convention was held, in the chamber of the doomed King, for the purpose of signing his great charter of donations, the third which had been bestowed.[4] The King, Queen, two archbishops, ten bishops, and many of the abbots and nobility, were present on the occasion. The earliest charter bears the date of 1045, and has the signatures of the King, the Queen, and the King's mother, Emma of Normandy, whose name, as before, precedes that of the Queen.

Some have asserted that Edward really was present at the solemn pageant of the dedication of the new abbey, and that he was taken ill immediately after it was over, and removed from the abbey to his bed; but others maintain a contrary opinion, and say that the fact of the King's absence, and the idea of danger in his condition of health, necessarily suggested in consequence, threw a deep gloom over the thousands who had assembled to witness the spectacle.

Edward lingered for a week longer in his sufferings

[1] Dart's Westminster.
[2] December 28.
[3] Twysden.
[4] Dart's Westminster.

His death took place on the 5th of January, 1066, at Westminster, and the chamber in which he expired still remained in Camden's time, "close to Sir Thomas Cotton's House." The following account of the death-bed of the saintly monarch is from Caxton's Golden Legende:—

"Among the persons who surrounded the death-bed of Edward, were the Queen, Duke Harold, Robert, keeper of the palace, and Stigand. This last gave no credence to the prophetic words uttered by Edward, concerning the approaching disasters of the country, and, ascribing it to the King's age and feebleness, made it out to be a phantasy; but others present wept, sorrowed, and wrung their hands. Edward, perceiving his hour drew nigh, spoke to them that stood weeping about him, and in comforting them, said, 'Forsooth, if ye loved me ye would pray that I should pass from this world to the Father of Heaven, there to receive the joy which is promised to all true Christian men: put ye away your weeping, and speed forth my journey with prayers and holy psalms, and with alms-deeds. For though my enemy, the Fiend, may not overcome me in my faith, yet there is none found so perfect but he will assay, and tempt to let or to fear him.' When he beheld the Queen, and saw her weep and sigh, he said to her oftentimes, 'My daughter, weep not, for I shall not die, but I shall live, and shall depart from the land of death, I believe, to see the goodness of God in the land of life.' And then he set his mind all on God, and gave himself wholly to the faith of the Church, in the hope and promises of Christ, under the sacraments of the Church. He commended the Queen to her brother in praising her goodness and virtue unto his lords, and

declared to them their mode of life. 'For she was to him in open places as his wife, and in secret places as his sister.'[1] And he commanded, also, that her dowry should be made sure to her; and that they that came with him out of Normandy should be put to their choice, whether they would abide still in England, and be endowed with livelihood after their degree, or else return again into Normandy with a sufficient reward, and he chose his place for his own sepulture in the Church of St. Peter, which he had newly builded. And among words of praising, he yielded up his spirit to God in the year of our Lord 1066."

The last wishes of the Confessor were strictly observed, and his remains deposited before the high altar in the Church of St. Peter's, Westminster, the funeral obsequies being attended by those very nobles he had himself invited to the solemn dedication of that sacred edifice:[2] the royal interment took place on Twelfth Day, as some say, the day following that of the dedication of the abbey. As soon as Edward's mortal remains were placed in the tomb, "the same Witan which had met to consecrate the abbey,[3] proceeded to

[1] Ailred.

[2] Robert of Gloucester, who says he died on the 4th and was buried on the 12th, thus notices the obsequies of Edward:—"With Edward the happiness of the English expired, liberty perished, and all vigour was inhumed. At his exequies, bishops and a multitude of priests and ecclesiastics, with dukes, earls, and governors, assembled together. A crowd of monks went thither, and innumerable bodies of people flew hastily to his funeral. Here psalms resound, there sighs and tears burst out; everywhere joy and grief commixed, are carried to the church; and that temple of chastity, that dwelling of virtue (the King) is honourably interred in the place appointed by himself."

[3] Dart's Westminster Abbey.

elect their new king." In this crisis, Harold, Earl of Wessex, the Queen's brother, took possession of the crown, which King Edward is said to have, previously to his death, granted him, and he was now consecrated King, "on the Twelfth Day," the day of the royal funeral, putting on his own head the insignia of his new dignity, at Lambeth. While this powerful noble maintained his authority as King, Editha's position as Queen Dowager was doubtless respected.

Editha's estates were very numerous, and scattered about in nearly every county of England, so that her generous mind had many opportunities of exercising private as well as public beneficence. Even after the Conquest, Queen Editha appears to have possessed, in some instances, the right of transferring her property: she is mentioned in Domesday, as having bestowed several parcels of land, in dower, upon one Ailsi, who had married the daughter of Wluard, probably one of her attendants, and also as having granted eight hides of land at Firle, in Sussex, to the foreign Abbey of Greystein. Editha was, in general, a great benefactress to the Church, and especially to Sarum; a grant was made by her, after she became a widow, to the Church of St. Mary. The following extract is copied from the records in the Bodleian Collection, of that act of royal munificence. "I, Editha, relict of King Edward, give to the support of the canons of St. Mary's Church, in Sarum, the lands of Sceorstan, in Wiltshire, and those of Forinanburn to the Monastery of Wherwell, for the support of the nuns serving God there, with the rights thereto belonging, for the soul of King Edward."[1]

[1] Philipps' Account of Old Sarum.

It has been asserted by some, that Editha was permitted by the Norman Conqueror to retain peaceably all her possessions for life, and that on her decease they reverted to the Crown. This is not, however, a correct statement, as some years before the death of Editha, King William despoiled her of all her rich territories, and amongst the number Martock and Chewton Mendip, which were in the King's hands at the time of the Norman survey.[1] When the survey was taken, the Earl of Brittany had also seventy-eight hides of land in his own possession, and ninety hides held under him, all of which had belonged to the widowed Editha.[2] Among other possessions, of which the Queen was deprived by William, was the Manor of Richmond, in the parish of Cambridge, which had formed a part of her large dowry, the whole of which was given by the Norman King to Alan, Earl of Brittany and Richmond.[3] Martock, in Somersetshire, which had been taken by King William from Queen Editha, was given to Eustace, Earl of Boulogne, who had married Goda, Edward the Confessor's sister. Twiverton, in Somersetshire, is thus named in Domesday Book: "This land Alfred held of Queen Eddid. Now the Bishop holds it of the King, as he says."

The supposed generosity of William, if at all shown towards Editha, does not appear to have extended to her mother Githa, Godwin's widow, who, through fear of so powerful an enemy, quitted England in 1068, an affliction, doubtless, felt deeply by her daughter. Githa, who was immensely rich, and at this time much advanced in years, had survived the deaths of her five gallant sons, all slain in the battle-field; she had before

[1] Collinson. [2] Lysons's Cambridge. [3] Idem.

that been, as it would appear, a spectator of the catastrophe which deprived her husband of life; and after beholding Editha, her daughter, during eighteen years a queen in dignity, but a melancholy and unloved wife, witnessed her contented retirement to the condition of private life. The ambition of Harold, and his subsequent defeat and death, were her crowning sorrows; and after living two years in continual fear of King William, Githa retired to St. Omers, where her daughter Gunilda had assumed the religious veil, or to Bruges, where, it appears, that lady died in 1087; a fact ascertained by an epitaph discovered some years since, in the church in which Gunilda's remains were deposited. No sooner had the widow of Godwin departed from England than William the Conqueror seized on her immense landed possessions, amounting to 39,600 acres,[1] and distributed them among his Norman followers.

Queen Editha survived her husband nine years, spent principally at Winchester. During her residence there, she is said to have been a spectator of the procession to the Cathedral, when Walker was about to be consecrated Bishop of Durham, which drew from her the remark, "We have here a noble martyr!" So affected was she by the sight of that excellent

[1] Some few years before the invasion of this country by the Normans, Gueda, wife of Godwin, Earl of Kent, in expiation of her husband's treacherous abuses of divers monastic institutions, had bestowed the Manor of Crowcombe, in Somersetshire, on the church of St. Swithin, at Winchester, in pure and perpetual alms; but amongst other depredations which took place at the coming in of the Conqueror, this manor was seized, and fell a sacrifice to private property, King William presenting it to his favourite, the Earl of Morton.—Collinson's Somersetshire.

prelate's appearance, with his snow-white hair, rosy countenance, and extraordinary stature; for her previous experience of the mutinous disposition of the people over whom he was about to preside, led her to fear his fate; so literally was this reflection of the Queen fulfilled that it was looked upon, by those who were acquainted with her piety, as a miraculous prediction, for, in 1080, six years after the death of Editha, Walker was severely maltreated by the Northumbrians, and, at length, put to death by them.[1]

Editha expired at Winchester, as is supposed, in the Abbey of St. Mary, about a week before Christmas, in the year 1074;[2] in her last moments, she solemnly affirmed, she had lived during the eighteen years of her union, as though no such tie had existed;[3] in consequence of which asseveration, the following epitaph was composed in Latin for this Queen. "She sprung of an ancient house, lived godly, entered into marriage a chaste virgin, and into heaven a chaste spouse."[4]

If William the Conqueror did not spare Queen Editha's possessions in her lifetime, he showed much honour to that Queen after death, and the title of *Regina* was assigned to her in almost every entry of her name in the Domesday Book. William took care that the funeral obsequies of Editha should be performed in a

[1] William of Malmesbury.

[2] Neale says 1073 was the date of this Queen's death, and that it took place on the 15th of the Calends of January, eight years after that of her husband. Roger of Wendover says the date was 1074.

[3] Holinshed, William of Malmsbury, Neale.

[4] Gough.

manner befitting her regal dignity:[1] by his orders the Queen's remains were removed with every royal honour from Winchester to Westminster, having been previously placed in a coffin covered with plates of silver and gold; on their arrival they were deposited by the side of St. Edward the Confessor.

A splendid tomb or shrine "of delicately worked gold and silver, and of admirable beauty," was soon afterwards erected at the express command of William over the remains of the royal pair. That they had one common tomb appears from the charter granted on this occasion, in which King William, after bestowing one hundred pounds of silver to complete the building of the abbey, adds: "From respect of the great love which I had for the renowned King Edward himself, I have caused the tomb of him, and his queen placed beside him, to be marvellously overlaid with smith's work of artificial beauty in gold and silver."

Not long after the offering made by King William at the tomb of St. Edward, miracles were said to be wrought there, of which the first was when Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, was required by the Conqueror to resign his see. The prelate answered that he had received his staff from St. Edward, and would resign it to him alone. Going to his tomb, Wulstan struck it with his staff, which adhered to it; nor could it be separated by any prayers or hands than those of the prelate, its owner.

Edward the Confessor was canonized by Pope Alexander the Third, A.D. 1161, at the solicitation of King Henry the Second, who was induced to request this by his favourite, Thomas à Becket; and it was appointed

[1] Malmesbury.

that St. Edward's festival should be kept throughout England on the 5th of January, and his translation on the 13th of October; this last being to commemorate the solemn translation of the King's body on that day, about two years from the date of his canonization, and its removal into a higher tomb, which had been prepared for it by the English monarch's directions, a new shrine being also made on the occasion at the request of Becket.[1] Upon opening the coffin, which was then done with much solemnity at midnight, the body of the King was found incorrupt, and his dress was taken off as a precious relic, and made into three embroidered copes by Abbot Lawrence; also the ring that had been given to St. John the Evangelist was taken off and given to the abbey. The royal corpse was afterwards re-wrapped up and deposited in its new tomb, October 13th, 1163, in presence of King Henry the Second, St. Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, and many bishops, abbots, and persons of distinction, who attest the incorrupt state in which the royal remains and the garments in which they rested were found.[2] On that same day a book of St. Edward's life and miracles, written by Ailred, Abbot of Rievaulx, in Yorkshire, was dedicated and presented to King Henry the Second, and at the same time a bull was issued by Pope Innocent the Fourth to settle the ceremonial of the anniversary of the festival of St. Edward.[3]

[1] Brit. Sancta.

[2] The surname of Confessor was given to St. Edward from the bull of his canonisation issued by Pope Alexander, about a century after his death.—Lingard.

[3] In 1247, King Henry III. received a present from the Knights

When the church was rebuilt the remains of the Queen of Edward the Confessor were transferred from the north to the south side of St. Edward's shrine, and

Templars in the Holy Land (attested by the Patriarch of Jerusalem and other bishops of that country) of a small portion of the blood of our Saviour shed at the Crucifixion. On the anniversary of King Edward's translation, October 13th, King Henry went in person, on foot, in solemn procession, from St. Paul's to Westminster Abbey, carrying this gift in a crystal vessel, elevated above his head, under a canopy, his arms supported by priests, attended by his nobility, who had been summoned on this occasion, with bishops, abbots, monks, and an innumerable multitude of persons, and offered it to God, St. Peter, and Edward the Confessor. The Bishop of Norwich celebrated high mass on this occasion, and pronounced on all attending the solemnity one hundred and forty days' indulgence. A sumptuous feast was also given at the adjoining palace. In 1297, King Edward I., to show his respect for his namesake-saint, offered at his shrine in Westminster, the chair, sceptre, and crown of gold of the Scottish kings.—Brit. Sanc.

After the coronation of King James II. the tomb of Edward the Confessor received some damage by an accident. The coffin, being of wood, bound with iron, was broken into a hole about six inches by four, near the right breast of the corpse, which was examined by Mr. Taylor on St. Barnabas's Day, 1685, by putting his hand into the chasm and drawing from under the shoulder-bones a crucifix, richly enamelled and gilt, on it the figure of Christ crucified, and an eye above casting a ray on him. On the reverse, a Benedictine monk, and on each side of him these Roman capitals :—on the right limb, Z $\overset{A}{A}$ X; on the left, A $\overset{P}{C}$. The cross was hollow, as if to $\overset{A}{H}$ enclose some relic; the upright part four inches, the transverse three. This was attached to a chain of pure gold, twenty-four inches long, the links oblong and curiously wrought, the upper joined by a locket composed of knobs of massy gold, and on each side were set two large red stones, supposed rubies. The examiner drew the head to the hole, and found it sound and firm, as were also the teeth and a list of gold, about an inch broad, surrounding the temples. There were also white linen and gold-coloured flowered

Henry the Third ordered that a lamp should be kept burning perpetually over the tomb of Queen Editha "the Good."

silk, that fell to pieces on being touched. These were shown to the Dean of Westminster, Dr. Dolben, Archbishop of York, and Dr. Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, and at length deposited with the King, and the coffin secured with a new one bound in iron.

EDITHA "THE FAIR."

CONTENTS.

The father of Editha—Godiva, wife of Leofric—Wealth and power of the Earl of Coventry—The famous legend considered—Leofric's munificence to the Church—The lines in the painted window—Godiva's donation of gems and goldsmith's work to Coventry Abbey—Algar, the father of Editha the Fair, flies to Wales—Marries his daughter to the Welsh Prince, Griffith ap Llewellyn—Nest, his first wife—Her sons—Griffith ap Conan and his wife Angharaud—Violent contentions of the Welsh and English—Restoration of Algar—Harold pursues the Welsh—Defeats them—Lays siege to and burns Ruddlan Castle—Editha the Fair taken prisoner—Death of Griffith—Harold marries his widow—Hereford destroyed and re-fortified—Harold's pillars—His breach of promise to Adeliza—Harold becomes King—The battle of Hastings—The search for the body—Editha the Swan-necked—The Recluse of Chester—Eddeva Dives—Her possessions seized by the Conqueror—Stortford in Hertfordshire—The tomb discovered.

EDITHA the Fair was the daughter of Algar, the third Earl of Chester and Coventry, and granddaughter of Leofric the Third, husband of Godiva, so famous in traditional story. The title of Earl of Warwick and Earl of Leicester were more than once borne by the

noble representatives of this family, but they are more commonly spoken of as Earls of Mercia.

Godiva, the grandmother of Editha, appears to have been sister of the first Queen of Ethelred the Unready; both were daughters of Earl Thorold, Sheriff of Lincolnshire, the founder of Spalding Abbey. Leofric was a warlike and powerful chief, who, in 1057, led an army in defence of Ethelred against the Danish King, Sweyn.[1]

The great wealth and power of Leofric, and the liberality of both himself and his wife Godiva to the Church, secured them the good repute of the monkish chroniclers. Perhaps the legendary tale of Godiva's ride through the silent streets of Coventry is not altogether a poet's fiction: the manners of the time were still rude and coarse, and a penance of any sort for the good of the Church was considered a worthy act. That Leofric granted many advantages to the city of Coventry, to his benevolent consort's prayers, is very probable; and in memory of the delivery of the citizens from oppressive enactments, the effigies of Leofric and Godiva were long to be seen in a window in the old church of Trinity, at Coventry, in which the Earl holds in his hand a charter, inscribed with lines which might have given rise to the legend—

> "I, Leurich, for love of thee
> Doe make Coventry toll free."

Godiva, on her own account, was a great benefactress to the city, and bestowed much wealth on the monastery

[1] Some years ago the seal of the Earl of Mercia, Alfric or Leofric, was discovered in digging a bank near Winchester, and was found to bear the following inscription:—"+ Sigillum Alfric Al." The figure exhibited on the seal holds the sword with which the earls

there, which had been founded by Leofric and Godwin jointly. She showered on the monks jewels and ornaments, "having sent for skilful goldsmiths, who, with all the gold and silver she had, made crosses, images of saints, and other decorations." The value of the jewels bestowed on Coventry Abbey are said to be inestimable; and on her death-bed the Countess bequeathed a precious circlet of gems, which she wore round her neck, valued at one hundred marks of silver (about 2,000*l.* of our money), to the image of the Virgin in Coventry Abbey, praying that all who come thither would say as many prayers as there were gems in it![1]

Leofric died in 1057, and was succeeded in the Earldom of Mercia by his son Algar, whose family consisted of two sons, Edwin and Morcar—names which occur frequently in the history of the continued struggles of the times—and of two daughters, Editha, sometimes called Edgifa, and Lucia.

The year after his accession to the paternal inheritance, Algar was outlawed by King Edward the Confessor, but soon afterwards he recovered his earldom by the help of Griffith ap Llewelyn, King of Wales, and the Northmen. To return this well-timed favour, the hand of Editha, the beautiful daughter of Algar, was afterwards bestowed by the Earl on the Welsh king.

Ranulf, or Nest, as she is more frequently called, was the first Queen of Griffith ap Llewelyn, and had borne to him three children, Meredith, Ithel, and Agnes. She

were installed in their new dignity. The head of Alfric is also encircled with a diadem similar to that borne by King Ethelred on his coins,—a proof of his high dignity. This noble was among the first to assent to the tribute called the Danegelt.

[1] Saxon Chronicle, Fl. Wigorn, R. Wendover.

was daughter of Alfred, King of Man and the Isles, and after the death of her first husband, a King of Ulster, had married Conan, King of North Wales, son of Jago ap Edwal. Her son by these second nuptials is known in history as Griffith ap Conan, and was born and educated at Dublin. This Prince was a remarkable person in his times, and has been thus quaintly described:—"Griffith in his person was of moderate stature, having yellow hair, a round face, and a fair and agreeable complexion, eyes rather large, light eyebrows, a comely beard, a round neck, white skin, strong limbs, long fingers, straight legs, and handsome feet. He was, moreover, skilful in divers languages, courteous and civil to his friends, fierce to his enemies, and resolute in battle; of a passionate temper, and fertile imagination." To him the Welsh people were indebted for a reform in their minstrels and national music. The mother and grandmother of Griffith being natives of Ireland, "the land of harps and harmony," they derived from them some of the best tunes, better performers, and a higher order of instruments. This King also built castles and churches, planted trees, orchards and gardens, and cultivated the soil. Maintaining peace with his neighbours, he appointed his sons guardians of the frontiers, and the petty princes repaired to his court for protection.[1]

The Welsh monk, to whom we are indebted for the Life of Griffith ap Conan, thus describes his Queen Angharaud, whose name is even at the present day held in honour in Wales:—"She was an accomplished person. Her hair was long and of a flaxen colour, her eyes large and rolling, and her features brilliant

[1] Yorke's Royal Tribes of Wales; Sebright MSS. Life of Griffith ap Conan.

and beautiful. She was tall and well-proportioned, her leg and foot handsome, her fingers long, and her nails thin and transparent. She was good-tempered, cheerful, discreet, and witty; gave advice, as well as alms, to her needy dependents, and never transgressed the laws of duty."[1]

Overtaken by blindness in his old age, Griffith devoted himself to religion. Perceiving he was approaching the hour of dissolution, he sent for his sons, and gave his last directions, his Queen Angharaud being present. After a variety of bequests to the place of his birth and the churches he desired to advance, with those religious men who officiated in them, he bestowed his blessing on his sons,[2] foretelling the various fortunes of each, and the character he should support, enjoining them to combat their enemies with resolution and constancy, as he had himself done to

[1] Angharaud's father was Owen ap Edwyn, Lord of Englefield; her great-grandfather Grono was founder of the tribe which bore his name. The tribe which derived its origin from Griffith ap Conan was ranked the first of the *five royal tribes of Wales*. The fifteen common tribes were all of North Wales, and their respective representatives, forming the nobility, were lords of distinct districts, and always bore some hereditary office in the palace; it being one of the laws of King Howel Dha that the Court of Wales should possess twenty-four great officers.

[2] Angharaud had a numerous family. Three sons bore the names of Owen, Cadwallader, and Cadwallo; and five daughters, of whom one was married to Griffith ap Rhys, King of South Wales, one of the ancestors of Owen Tudor. This high-spirited princess, who was called "Gwenlian," a term equivalent to "white linen," heading an army in her husband's favour, was taken prisoner in the battle and put to death. Her sister Susanna married Madog ap Maredudd; and Maryed, the offspring of their union, espoused Jorwerth Drwyndurn, by whom she had Llewelyn the Great.—Yorke's Royal Tribes of Wales.

show them an example. To Angharaud he bequeathed one-half of his personal estates, with two portions in land, and the customs at Aber-menai. To his daughters and nephews, who were also present, he appointed a sufficient legacy for their maintenance.[1] At the time when Griffith ap Conan died, A.D. 1136, he had attained his eighty-second year: he was interred on the left side of the great altar at Bangor.[2]

At the period of Editha's marriage with the step-father of this Griffith he was very young; he was about fourteen when she was married to Harold, and with his half-brothers and sisters lived in state at the castle of Griffith ap Llewelyn, at Rhuddlan.

When Algar sought assistance from Griffith ap Llewelyn, the commander sent by King Edward against their united forces was Harold, who, destined afterwards to become the husband of the young bride of the Welsh king, was to the end of his career his most mortal foe. He pursued the Welsh into their mountain fastnesses, inured his soldiers to similar hardships as that hardy people, and spared no pains to conquer so resolute and so dangerous a foe to the English.

Throughout Griffith's life, even after Algar had recovered his earldom by the tame acquiescence of King Edward, that prince never ceased attacking and annoying the country, out of which every precaution was

[1] Rhys, brother of Griffith, having been taken prisoner by the English in 1053, was, by Edward's orders, put to death at Balandune, and his head sent to the King, then holding his court at Gloucester.

[2] Yorke's Royal Tribes of Wales.

taken in vain to keep him. Ruthless and savage, and glad of any excuse to contend against England, Griffith was still fighting for Algar when they laid waste together the English borders, and approaching within two miles of Hereford, encountered Ranulf, Earl of Hereford, whom, with his forces, they put to flight. Having entered the city, they burnt the minster, and slew seven of the canons in their attempt to defend it, levelled the walls, and fired the city. Many noble persons were put to death by the combined armies, and others carried off captive, the conquerors returning into Wales laden with their spoils. Harold's orders at this time were to assemble all the forces of the kingdom at Gloucester. At the head of the army the son of Godwin advanced as far as Snowdon; but hearing that Griffith and Algar had retreated into North Wales, he returned to Hereford, leaving a part of his army to keep the country in awe. He took this opportunity to rebuild the walls of Hereford and fortify the city. Meantime he negociated a peace with Griffith, which has been esteemed dishonourable to that prince. It stipulated that Algar should be freely pardoned, without making any compensation for the damages done or expenses caused by the war. On this the Earl returned to Chester, and afterwards repaired to the court of Edward, from whom he obtained a confirmation of his pardon and dignity, A.D. 1058.

Griffith, husband of Editha, afterwards openly violated the peace he had made with the King, by an inroad into Herefordshire, when the Bishop of Hereford was slain at Glastonbury, as well as the viscompte or sheriff of the county, and many other persons. Again, however,

peace was restored by the mediation of Harold and the Earl of Mercia.

In 1063, Algar, who had again forfeited, once more recovered his earldom.

The patience of the Confessor having been at length exhausted by these repeated incursions, he determined to utterly subdue the rebellious Welsh; and once more employed the son of Godwin as his general. At the head of a large army, Harold arrived in North Wales, having taken his measures with such expedition and good order, as nearly to surprise Griffith in his palace at Rhuddlan. Scarcely had the Welsh king effected his escape, with a few attendants, to one of his own ships, which set sail instantly and placed him beyond the reach of his enemies, when Harold and the English appeared before his castle gates; and such was the mortification of Harold at his escape, that he burnt the royal residence, and set fire to every ship and vessel left in the harbour. If Editha, at this disastrous epoch, was the companion of Griffith's flight, she must soon after have fallen into the hands of Harold. That chieftain returned to Bristol, where he fitted out a new fleet, and sailed round the Welsh coast. His brother Tostig, meanwhile, had marched into North Wales, where Harold landed, and they joined their forces for the final destruction of the unfortunate Welsh. These were driven out of their last retreats, and forced to sue for peace. Without their King, having no means of defence, and destitute of provisions, they could hold out no longer; they renounced their oath of allegiance to Griffith, and gave hostages to Harold for the secure payment of their ancient tribute. The triumphant

Harold commemorated this occasion by erecting several stone pillars, each of which bore the pompous inscription, "HIC FUIT VICTOR HAROLDUS!"[1]

A.D. 1064. Griffith returned, the summer afterwards, to North Wales, where he landed, and endeavoured to raise a violent opposition to Harold, who was then in South Wales, part of which he had subdued. Some disaffection, however, had sprung up among the people, who, though fear had influenced them when they renounced their fealty in favour of the English, did not now welcome their King as he expected. Far from rallying under his standard, they listened to the instigations of Harold, and put their brave monarch to death, whose head, with the prow of the vessel in which he had returned, they sent to the son of Godwin.[2] "The idol of his people and terror of his enemies," as Griffith has been termed, fell thus ignominiously at the close of a thirty-four years' reign. He was renowned for his skill in government, ability in war, and those amiable manners which had commanded the affection of all who knew him.

After Griffith's death, Harold married Editha the Fair; their nuptials took place A.D. 1065,[3] and on the chief quitting Wales, Editha accompanied him as his wife.

Harold had been married before, but the name of his first wife is unknown. On her death, he had contracted to marry Adeliza, one of the daughters of

[1] "William of Jumièges, gives an account of Harold's victory in Wales.

[2] Yorke's Royal Tribes of Wales, Warrington.

[3] Ordericus Vitalis.

William the Conqueror, who had aimed thus to unite his family to one whom Edward, who was childless, designed as his successor. Harold, when he married Editha, and broke through his promise to William, did it in the hope of strengthening his interest at home; for by this match he bound the two powerful Earls, Edwin and Morcar, the brothers of Editha, and with them the English, their adherents, to espouse his cause, and from this time the son of Godwin openly aspired to the succession. Tostig, Harold's brother, had been so tyrannical in his rule over the Northumbrians, that they rebelled, and he was forced to fly. Edwin and Morcar had taken part in the insurrection, and the former had been elected in the place of Tostig. Before the engagement, Morcar, knowing the generous temper of Harold, endeavoured to justify his own conduct, representing how unworthily Tostig had acted, and even urging that such conduct could not be supported even by a brother, without sharing in the infamy attached to it; that the Northumbrians were willing to submit to Edward, but only under a leader who would respect their rights; "that they had been taught by their ancestors, that death was preferable to servitude, and had taken the field determined to perish rather than suffer a renewal of those indignities to which they had so long been exposed; and they trusted that Harold, on reflection, would not defend in a brother that violent conduct from which he himself, in his own government, had always kept at so great a distance." This vigorous remonstrance was accompanied with such a detail of facts, and so well supported, that Harold found it prudent to abandon his brother's cause; and returning to Edward, he persuaded him to pardon the Northumbrians, and to confirm

Morcar in the government.[1] This moderation gained the affections of the people.

On the death of Algar, in 1065, Edwin succeeded, through Harold's interest, to the earldom, and thus the two brothers had considerable authority in the country.

Edward the Confessor soon after dying, Harold, without any formality, snatched the crown of the realm, which he is said, like his predecessor, Harold Harefoot, to have put on his head with his own hands, at Lambeth: he was afterwards crowned at St. Paul's. The ceremony[2] of Harold's coronation is one of the subjects represented on the Bayeux tapestry. In this celebrated specimen of female art, one man offers him the crown, another a battle-axe. Harold appears on his throne, with the globe and cross in his left hand, and a sceptre in his right. On his right hand stand two men who are presenting to him a sword, and Stigand, the Archbishop, is standing on his left. The inscriptions are: 'Here they gave the crown to King Harold: here sits Harold, King of the English, Stigand Archbishop.' There is no mention made of Editha, but most likely she shared in the coronation honours. Harold, on some of his coins, is represented with a diadem of pearls which he bears on a helmet. Although Editha is not styled "*regina*" in Domesday Book, her regal rank is proved not only by her immense possessions, but by her having a chaplain, and by her also having for a tenant "a man of noble birth."[3]

[1] Turner, Hume. [2] History of Lambeth Palace, Turner, Selden.

[3] Sir Henry Ellis, who says truly, that there was so short a time "between the battle of Hastings and the Conqueror's distribution of forfeited lands, that we cannot wonder to find every mention of a wife of Harold omitted in the Domesday returns."

Editha must have been more than ordinarily remarkable for personal beauty. She is always termed "the most beautiful Editha:"[1] the Domesday Book calls her Eddeva "Pulchra," and Eddeva "Faera:" even the Normans attest her remarkable beauty. Throughout the Domesday Survey, Harold is never mentioned as king; his wife, therefore, would not be likely to be designated as a queen. Another reason for this omission is obvious. Harold had been contracted to the daughter of William, and had broken his faith. The Conqueror could not forgive the insult, and would not acknowledge Harold or his wife to be legitimate heirs of the throne. Some writers say that William bitterly reproached Harold for his perfidy; others state that the young Princess of Normandy was dead at the time when Harold espoused Editha the Fair.

Under whatever circumstances Editha had become Queen of Harold, whether with or without her consent, after the death of her turbulent husband Griffith, to whom she was united by her father's policy, and who was much older than herself, she did not enjoy the regal honours of the English sway for more than a few months. Harold fell at Hastings within a year after his becoming king, and of all his glory and his valour nothing remained but a mangled corpse, sought for on the battle-field by two monks, who, unable to identify it, besought the aid of Editha the Fair, or the Swan-necked,—a personage about whom historians differ so widely, that it is impossible to pronounce positively whether she was the beautiful Queen herself, or a favourite of Harold's, whose beauty had gained her the same title as distinguished the consort of the monarch.

[1] Jumiège. Saxon Chronicle.

The mother of Harold is said to have offered its weight in gold for her son's body, and every possible effort was made to discover it amongst the slain. If it had really been found, the legend could scarcely have existed of the unfortunate King having been borne by secret friends from the field, his wounds healed by their care, and becoming afterwards a solitary hermit in a cave on the banks of the Dee, near the Abbey of St. John's, at Chester, disclosing at length, on his death-bed, the fact of his identity. Equally uncertain must be the story of Editha the Swan-necked finding his body.

Queen Editha the Fair was at all events in London after the fatal battle, whither her brothers marched in great haste, to persuade the Londoners to advance them to the kingdom. Dreading the treatment their sister might receive from the hands of the Norman Conqueror, these Earls sent her from London to Chester,[1] which was a part of their own territories. Some say she was sent to West-Chester or Winchester. She resigned her regal rank from that time, and passed the rest of her life in obscurity. This prudent conduct did not, however, disarm the vengeance of William. "Eddeva Pulchra" was also known as "Eddeva Dives," from the great amount of her property; and the broad lands of the widowed Queen were seized by the successful Norman. These amounted to 27,600 acres.[2] Her fee in Cambridgeshire alone[3] was considered of sufficient value to form part of the noble reward bestowed by

[1] Holinshed, Domesday Book.

[2] Holinshed, Florence of Worcester.

[3] Among these estates was the house and lands known by the name of Harold's Park. Harold received from his property in the manor of Waltham 36*l.*, in the time of King Edward the Confessor. —Ogborne.

William upon Alan, first Earl of Richmond; and thus deprived of her rich inheritance and possessions, the widow of Griffith and Harold was compelled to seek the cloister as an asylum for her closing existence, not only as a place of safety, but a means of securing even a subsistence. A talented authoress of our own times,[1] in writing of Queen Editha, states that "the convent to which she retired, the date of her death, her place of burial, are alike unknown; and the record of her broad lands, and the fame of her beauty, are all that now remain to us of Editha the Fair." One single line, however, preserved in Leland, informs us that the widow of Harold, after having lived through the greater part of the reign of William the Conqueror, deprived of regal dignity, stripped of lands and estates, the survivor of her parents, of two husbands and brothers, and of her namesake, Editha the Good, the widow of Edward closed a life of vicissitude and trial, in piety and peace, and was buried *and worshipped as a saint*, at Stortford, in Hertfordshire.[2] About twelve years ago, some workmen of that town, being employed in making preparations for an interment near the font of the church, came upon an ancient vault, exactly underneath it, constructed of rubble, and supposed to be as old as the Saxon times. This vault is considered the repository of the last remains of Editha the Fair, wife of the Saxon King Harold.

[1] Miss Lawrence.

[2] "S. Aldgytha sepulta est in Storteford." (St. Algitha was buried at Stortford.)—Leland.

END OF THE LIVES.

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